



Eurotrip: This year's hot games

Will Brierley finds the Eurogamer Expo 2010 teeming with teenagers PAGE 13

THE BOAR

Tuesday October 19, 2010

The University of Warwick students' newspaper

Volume 33, Issue 2

Browne Report

The end of university as we know it.

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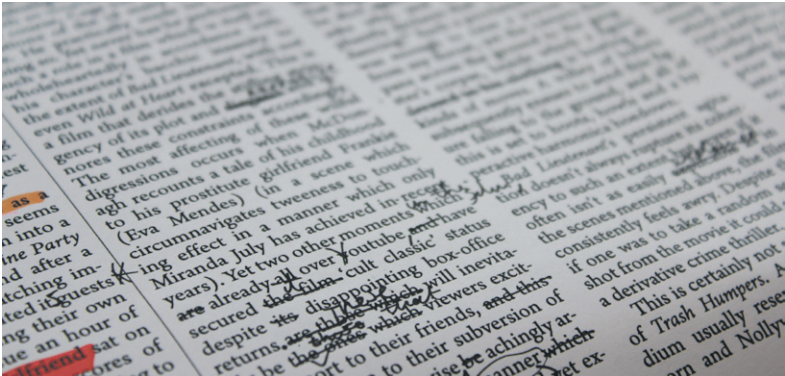
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SU finances back in the black



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Online exclusives

News reports on rooms shortages for first-year students, reaction to the Students' Union's new club nights, and how students in the new School of Life Sciences are faring.

Most popular

1. Inbetweeners come to Warwick
2. Halo: Reach review
3. Uni runs out of rooms
4. Warwick out of Times top 200
5. New club nights at SU

"Students provoke debate. That's what we do."

Published fortnightly, the *Boar* is produced entirely by and for students. The only way for you to be heard is to get involved, and there's never been a better time than right now; whether you're into pole-dancing or politics- we have positions for every interest and skill-level.

We are holding elections for Production Editor, Treasurer, Head of Publicity at 3pm in the *Boar* office, SUHQ. Email contact@theboar.org if you want to run for a position.

If you want to get involved, email contact@theboar.org or the section you are interested in writing for.

This is your paper, use it!"

Sudoku

						4	
3		6	9	4			
2				5	9	8	3
7			5				2
2			9		8	4	5
			2		8	3	1
	7				2		
		8	1		3		9
5	1			2			8

Difficulty: Tragic

The goal is to insert numbers in the boxes such that each row, column and 3x3 box contains the digits 1 through 9 exactly once.

Last solution:

9	2	4	8	1	7	6	3	5
8	3	5	6	2	4	9	7	1
1	6	7	9	5	3	4	8	2
2	4	3	5	9	8	1	6	7
5	9	8	7	6	1	3	2	4
6	7	1	4	3	2	8	5	9
4	8	6	2	7	9	5	1	3
7	1	9	3	8	5	2	4	6
3	5	2	1	4	6	7	9	8



Beth Lindley

Warwick's Students' Union (SU) has managed to recover its entire £750,000 deficit from 2008, allowing it to incorporate as a charity in line with new legal requirements.

Two years ago restricted access to the SU because of construction works which resulted in a "reclining bar trend" caused this "planned" deficit, Andy Glyde, then the SU finance officer, said to the *Boar* in October 2008. This deficit was "planned" whilst the Union had "positive cash reserves," said the current Finance Officer for the Union, Stuart Stanley, but as a result of a building delay the costs were "more than intended," which then exhausted the SU's financial reserves.

Stanley said that the debt was a result of closing nearly all of the Union's commercial operations over the course of the building work, at one point only leaving a temporary pub open, whilst still having to pay all of the overheads such as employing the

same number of full time staff. "The re-opening of the building helped", said Stanley, but "an issue with the longer term sustainability," resulted in "staff reconstructing" in the summer of last year. Many staff were laid off, and entire departments restructured.

The Union's building is owned by the university, the rent for which is "a fairly considerable sum," said Stanley.

Because of the Charities Act 2006, all "exempt charities," of which the Warwick Students' Union was one, were no longer able to exist in the same way. The SU made the change ahead of dates set by the government.

"Every students' union in the country is going through the same process," said Stanley. This change now means that as well as continuing to be a charity, the SU has its own charity number and its trustees' liability is "limited by guarantee." This means that in case of the SU amassing another huge debt, their trustees, made up of the Sabbatical team, some Student Trustees and other lay trustees

who advise the Union, would only be liable for a "very small" portion of that debt.

Whilst becoming a charity has not directly had a "big effect," according to Stanley, the SU is "now able to start to apply for more grants," which he added that he has already begun to look into, including inclusion in the Warwick University Student Caller scheme.

When asked about the long term prospects of the SU's finances, Stanley said "I think they're very good, we've had a good start to the year." Because of the closure of the rest of the SU for part of last year, the Dirty Duck had "phenomenal" success, and this year "everything's going really well... though we're never sure in this political climate." Stanley added that he expected the surplus this year to be "small", which will primarily be used to build up reserve funds in case "something did go wrong."

"The Union is here to support its students," said Stanley, who added that the "commercial outlets are here... [in order to] put money back into the Union."

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International fees to rise by £1,000

Natasha Clark

Prospective international students applying to study at The University of Warwick from next year will face an increase in tuition fees far beyond the rate of inflation.

This rise in fees will affect anyone applying to the university from outside of the EU, and will mean they will have to pay up to an extra £1,000 for their university education.

International students applying to study at Warwick in 2011 for 'library-based courses' such as Humanities will have to pay £825 more than students who started the same course this year. Similarly, students hoping to study Science, Economics, or Theatre and Performance courses will see a jump of £1,000 next year, an increase of over six per cent.

Five years ago, the same degree programmes would have cost between two and three thousand pounds less than they are today with band one subjects increasing from £9,150 to £11,500 between 2006 and 2011, and band two seeing fees soar from £11,900 to £15,000 per year.

The university claims that this rise which is 'just ahead of inflation last year' is in order to provide for the very high quality learning experience that is provided here at Warwick, according to the Head of Communications, Peter Dunn. Despite this, inflation in the UK stood at 3.2 per cent in June, and dropped slightly to 3.1 per cent in September as measured by the Consumer Prices Index.

Warwick Students' Union Education Officer Sean Ruston disagrees with the fee changes. "Warwick SU has made our opposition to this clear,



» Rises in the amount paid by foreign students will be significantly more than the rate of inflation

which is in line with our campaign regarding the Browne Review, 'War-

6%

Increase in international fees, around twice the rate of inflation

wick SU puts its foot down,' which opposes any increase in fees.

"We feel that these increases,

which are not in line with inflation, do not reflect increases in positive feedback from students and a better quality of teaching."

The *Boar* spoke to a number of students who are frustrated about the further increase of international tuition fees. Isabelle Lee, a third year Law student, who does not feel the changes are justifiable said, "I would not mind it if I saw some more resources and support for international students, but for the amount we pay, we do not see more benefits of tuition fee increases."

On the other hand, one first year Management student is not at all worried about the fee increase. "I think it

is understandable to increase the tuition fees for international students, as we do not have to pay taxes to study in England. My education is my top priority right now, and this increase will not affect me significantly in the long run."

This increase in fees will affect some students more than others. Another first year Computer Science student comments, "I am aware that there is a big inflation increase, but it's obvious that the international fees are above this. This will mean I will have to budget more carefully, and I definitely think that it will put more international students off coming to Warwick."

Boar writer up for Student Media Award

Warwick student Daniel Barrow has been shortlisted for Writer of the Year in the Guardian Student Media Awards.

Daniel, a third year English and Creative Writing student who writes for the music section of the *Boar*, said that his nomination was "very unexpected ... given the calibre of the judging team."

"The *Boar's* always been an enabling environment to write in. It's also the only paper I read these days, being too poor to buy the *Independent*."

WBS student killed in Afghanistan rescue

A Warwick Business School (WBS) student, Linda Norgrove, has been killed in Afghanistan during a failed rescue attempt by the US military.

Norgrove had been working as an aid worker in Afghanistan when she was kidnapped on 26th September. She died when US forces attempted to rescue her on 8 October.

At the time of her death, she had almost completed her WBS Distance Learning MBA. She had previously studied and researched at a number of universities, including the University of Aberdeen, University of Chiapas, Mexico, and Manchester University. Norgrove worked for the World Wildlife Fund in Peru before working for the UN in Afghanistan and Laos.

Professor Mark Taylor, Dean of WBS, said: "Linda was a wonderful individual who contributed so much to the world. She had so much more to give, and we are deeply saddened at her loss, but we are proud that Linda was part of our community and we will not forget her."

Not so smart: Leamington estate agent Smarter Housing folds

Griffin O'Rourke

The closure of student letting agency Smarter Housing, which folded due to bankruptcy in June this year, has left a number of students angry and disappointed.

It has emerged that the company was experiencing financial difficulties from possibly as early as the winter of 2009/10 and allegations have been made of irregularities in fiscal handling, including withdrawal of deposits from security policies and failure to pass rent on to landlords.

Thankfully for students who had arranged third-party agreements through Smarter Housing for this academic year, all tenancies still stand with landlords and the agent, as far as the *Boar* is aware, has not caused any termination of student lets.

Smarter Housing was liquidated during the summer and all its premises, including office space in Leamington, have since been vacated. Tenants were not informed first-hand, either hearing from landlords directly or via a general message sent out by the Students' Union.

According to some sources, the closure of Smarter Housing was a

very hasty process. One former tenant, Delphine, described the process of handing back keys after vacating her property: "When I went down to their office the signs had changed already and the place was already being operated as a shop. ... We weren't the only ones handing keys back. ... The shopkeepers clearly knew the situation and took the keys off anyone who came in."

"They didn't seem clued up at all. They were very unprofessional"

Smarter Housing tenant

This recent development follows a series of problems facing the company. The *Boar* reported in 2008 about accusations of sloppy property management and failure to rectify problems reported. Speaking to former tenants about their experiences with Smarter Housing, it was hard to find a positive response when their name was mentioned.

Jason, a final year student, told the *Boar*: "Their offices looked quite posh, more official than some agencies we'd looked in. We viewed the house and it looked nice... It did have lots of issues but we expected these

to be sorted."

"The house was not in a good state moving in. The shower leaked into the bedroom, rubbish was left in the house, there was mould everywhere. Nothing had been done between the last tenants moving out and us moving in", he said. Two weeks later the jobs were eventually completed and Jason and his housemates were advised that all communication should be directed through their landlord. They heard no more from Smarter Housing.

This was a recurring theme for other students. Delphine also commented: "Smarter Housing hardly told us anything". Nick, a final year student, was more scathing in his assessment. "No inventory was completed beforehand", he said, "They didn't seem clued up at all". Echoing Jason he commented on "rubbish left" prior to moving in, adding that they were "very unprofessional".

His landlord, Mr Barr, had threatened to take court action against the managing director of Smarter Housing, Adam Arnold, for theft of rent and deposits but apparently the dispute was settled before it came to court.

Smarter Housing was not one of the largest student let companies in



» Students took photos illustrating problems with their properties

the Warwickshire area, but did attract many undergraduates looking for properties in the Leamington and Coventry vicinities. The company was relatively new, only being registered in June 2005 and operating by January 2006. In their stated objectives they promised "the nicest houses, pre-arranged gas, electric and internet and exclusive student deals".

The *Boar* tried to contact Smarter Housing via phone and via a personal visit. No-one was available to comment from the former lettings agency, who have now closed all formal contact links.

In a brief statement, Warwick University wished to make it clear that they had "no financial link or partnership with" Smarter Housing – therefore taking no responsibility for those affected. However, if students were worried by the developments they were recommended to contact the accommodation team.

Despite the problems with Smarter Housing, all students interviewed were satisfied with their landlords. "Dr Singh owns lots of houses in Leamington," said Delphine, "we didn't ever need to speak to Smarter Housing about a problem".

Radical shake-up of higher education

Eyewatering cuts to university funding expected, forcing students to pay the full cost of their education

Derek Hatley

Tuition fees are likely to double or even treble and funding for university teaching is to be cut by up to 80 per cent under plans revealed last week. The proposals would shift the burden of financing university education almost entirely onto the shoulders of students and their families.

The Browne Review of higher education funding, which reported last Tuesday, recommended that the cap on tuition fees be scrapped and that the government should no longer contribute funds directly to university teaching, except in specific "priority" subjects (see sidebar opposite: Key points of the Browne report). Although the report was independent from government, there are indications that the coalition is likely to pass significant portions of it.

In a related development, government funding for university teaching will be cut from £3.9 billion to £700 million, a cut of 79 per cent, the BBC has reported. This is in addition to expected £1 billion cuts to research

80%

Cuts to higher education funding next year

funding – giving a total reduction of £4.2 billion. Sources confirmed that cuts on this scale are to be expected from the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR), which reports tomorrow. A University spokesperson declined to comment on the cuts until after the CSR reports.

The plans for withdrawing government funding for teaching and allowing universities to set their own fees indicate a radical programme of marketisation of the higher education sector. Browne argued that under his plans, "the money will follow the student who will follow the quality. The student is no longer taken for granted, the student is in charge."

He continued: "Students do not pay anything upfront. Only graduates pay and only then, when affordable according to the level of their earnings. Under our proposals, the bottom 20 per cent of earners will pay less than today and only the top 40 per cent of earners will pay back close to the full amount."

The plan's alleged benefits have not convinced student leaders.

"It accepts at face value the lazy myth that competition on price between universities leads to higher quality. ... It ignores the probability that at much higher fee levels, prospective students – especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds – will change their behaviour and make judgements primarily on cost

and debt. It fails to tackle the biggest questions in higher education. ... Instead, it imagines that ... fundamental questions shouldn't be 'answered' at all, but left to the 'invisible hand of the market' to resolve. This is complacent and dangerous," said Aaron Porter, President of the National Union of Students (NUS).

Warwick Students' Union echoed these sentiments. In a statement, the SU said: "By completely removing the cap the plan would unleash a market in Higher Education which would inevitably lead to students making choices about their future based on their parental income and not their academic ability."

Education Officer Sean Ruston added that cuts of 80 per cent "essentially represent the privatisation of the higher education sector. This is not merely a spending cut in line with deficit reduction but an ideologically driven privatisation agenda."

Ruston also noted that the disproportionately severe cut to higher education is due to Vince Cable, the Business Secretary, ringfencing funding for further education, shifting the burden of his department's cuts onto the higher education sector. Most government departments are expecting an overall reduction in funding of 20 to 30 per cent, rather than the 80 per cent cut to higher education funding.

The University and College Union (UCU), which represents lecturers, has joined with the NUS in opposing the cuts and fee hikes.

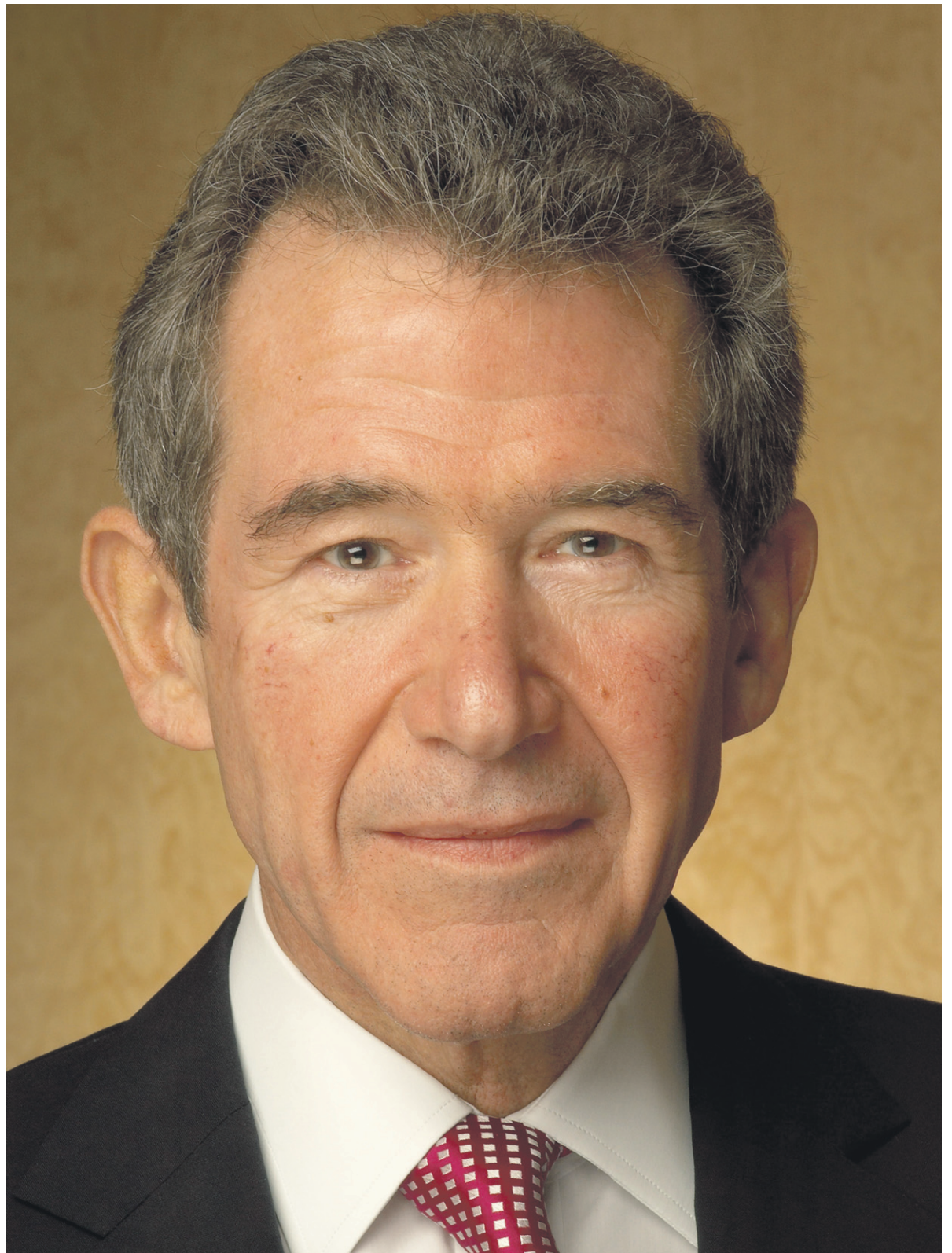
"It is hard to believe that any government could contemplate making £4.2bn cuts to higher education given that it generates massive economic growth," said Sally Hunt, the chair of the UCU.

On the subject of higher fees, Hunt said: "This is a savage attack on what a university is and what it can offer to all students ... as it effectively privatises the cost of higher education from state to family. ... As a result of this creation of a market for student places, we would see departments and universities close and a devastating effect on the curriculum as only so-called priority courses survive."

Despite opposition from student and academic leaders, the Government has indicated its support for the proposals.

"As a strategic direction the government believes the report is on the right lines," said Vince Cable.

The report's recommendation of higher fees will be fiercely opposed by many Liberal Democrat MPs, and may threaten the stability of the coalition government. Prior to the election, all sitting Lib Dem MPs signed an NUS pledge to vote against any rise in tuition fees, though the coalition agreement only allows them to abstain. It appears as though many Liberal Democrats will break their pre-election pledges and vote to implement Browne's recommendations. "In the current financial situation ... which we inherited, all pledges, all commitments, will have to be re-ex-



» Lord John Browne, the former Chief Executive of BP, led the controversial review photo: BP

amined from first principles," said Cable.

Despite indications that at least some Lib Dems will vote for the Browne Review, Warwick SU and the NUS will be focusing their campaign on lobbying Liberal Democrat MPs to honour their pledge, acknowledging that this approach is more likely to succeed than trying to turn Conservative MPs against a market-based approach to higher education.

Warwick's Vice-Chancellor, Nigel Thrift, also endorsed the proposals as the only option left to cash-strapped universities.

Thrift said: "[The] cuts will pose a significant challenge for our sector, particularly as it has long been

accepted that the higher education system is actually in need of substantially more investment rather than cuts.

"Currently Universities have few, if any, options available to them to cope with such a significant cut other than the option outlined in the Browne Review. Many commentators expect that universities will have little choice but to charge an undergraduate student fee of at least £6,000 simply to cope with the expected cut in university funding."

Leamington MP Chris White also indicated his support for the Review. He commented in a local newspaper: "I believe that our university system should be fairer and more accessible.

The Review recommends changes to the payment structure which will mean that less wealthy graduates pay less and that wealthier graduates pay more. This is something that I support as it will ensure that people from all economic backgrounds get a fair chance to go to university."

The NUS and UCU are planning a joint demonstration against the proposed changes on 10 November in London. Warwick SU and UCU are sending several coaches from the University to London for the demonstration. Ruston hopes to take more than 200 students to the demo.

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Money, page 12 »

to follow Browne review’s proposals

From Blair to Browne: the history of fees

Grace Massey

Up to the end of World War II, university education had been limited to the privileged few, but gradual education reform introduced universal higher education.

The Conservative government of 1962 passed the Education Act, obliging local authorities to pay tuition fees and contribute to maintenance grants for full-time students.

By 1963, almost 70 percent of students had their tuition fees paid for by the government in addition to receiving a maintenance grant. However, with a growing student population and the economic recession of the late 1980s all this began to change. With the introduction of student loans in 1990, the maintenance grant was annually reduced until 1998.

Ironically it was the Labour government that introduced top-up fees

in 1998. David Blunkett as Education Secretary effectively ended the principle of free higher education with the introduction and subsequent increase of fees and abolition of maintenance grants. The new system was a means-tested contribution where fees, representing up to a quarter of the cost of a course, were £1,000.

Despite backbench opposition – and contradicting their manifesto promises from 2001 – Labour implemented top-up fees in 2006, with most universities opting to charge the maximum £3,000 per year. The idea was to introduce a market in higher education, and allow universities to set their own fees. However, at around £3,000, the cap was too low, and the market failed to materialise, with each university charging the maximum amount allowed.

All students were now obliged to pay their tuition fees and maintenance loans after graduation, dependent on a certain band of income.

A decade after the first fees were introduced, the National Union of Students ended its campaign against tuition fees.

Until last week, the Liberal Democrats have been consistently opposed to tuition fees, and committed in their manifestos to phasing them out. Even the Conservatives opposed Labour’s introduction of fees, calling them in 2003 a “tax on learning”. Now it appears as though all parties are committed to increasing fees and supporting at least some cuts to higher education. Labour responded cautiously to the Browne Review, saying “it is right that students make some contribution towards to cost of their Higher Education” but criticising the increase in graduate debt and the depth of the funding cuts.

If, as appears likely, the present cap is removed or raised substantially, British students could end up paying some of the highest fees in the world for a university education.

The future of funding: what happens now?

Derek Hatley

Although the Government has endorsed “the main thrust” of the Browne Review, and the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) will set out nearly 80 percent cuts to higher education, the plans have yet to become government policy.

Some of the proposals, like raising interest rates on student loans, may go through in a matter of weeks, as the government may be able to use statutory instruments to force the changes through. Other, more drastic changes will take longer, as they require the creation of primary legislation, which has to go through Parliament before becoming law. The fees hike is one such matter that will require legislation, and any changes are unlikely to take effect until the 2012 intake of new students.

The CSR, on the other hand, is a “firm and fixed” three-year plan for departmental spending limits, and once it reports, will become policy without having to go through Parliament. Therefore, 80 percent cuts to government funding for university

teaching are almost certain to become reality – and sooner rather than later, as the CSR will take effect from the next financial year (2011-2012).

The varied timings of implementing policies means that the next year will be hectic indeed, with Government passing one change after the next, and the NUS and UCU (representing students and lecturers, respectively) responding to each one.

Cuts do not have to receive approval from Parliament to become a reality

It is likely the coalition will have to water down some of the proposals to placate some Liberal Democrat MPs, who will be uneasy about breaking their pre-election pledge to vote against any increase in fees. However, with 80 percent cuts looming, Lib Dems might be forced to accept higher fees rather than allow significant underfunding of the higher education sector.

Regardless of what happens in the

next few months, it is likely that the Browne Review will pass in some form, and the marketisation of higher education in the UK will become a reality. If this does occur, then the UK’s universities will look more and more like those in the United States.

Although American universities regularly top world rankings and are often better-funded than those in other countries, America also has some of the worst rates of socioeconomic inequality in the Western world, and nowhere is this more evident than in students’ choice of university. Poorer students will often elect to go to a much cheaper and more easily accessible community college rather than a prestigious university, and the spectre of hundreds of thousands of dollars in debt is enough to deter even middle-class students.

It will remain to be seen whether opening up the UK’s higher education sector to market forces will result in the same levels of debt and inequality as in the US, or whether the safeguards proposed in the Browne Review would be sufficient to protect those on lower incomes and not discourage them from attending top universities.

Key points of the Browne report

SECURING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

AN INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING & STUDENT FINANCE.
14 October 2010
www.independent.gov.uk/browne-report

Tuition Fees

- Abolish cap on tuition fees of £3,290 per year.
- This could potentially allow universities to charge fees of more than £20,000.
- Universities would, however, be subject to a levy on fees greater than £6,000 which would be used to pay for the cost to the government to provide students with upfront loans.
- The levy increases with for every £1,000 charged above £6,000.
- Universities would no longer have to offer a minimum bursary (currently £329).

Student loans and grants

- Students do not have to pay tuition fees up front.
- Students can take out a loan to cover the proposed variable fees, and loans for living costs will be capped at £3,750 for all students regardless of household income.
- Students would start to repay the cost of their loans when their income reaches £21,000, compared to the current £15,000.
- Interest on loans would be charged at 2.2 percent – equal to the Government’s rate of borrowing. The current rate of interest is zero percent, meaning the increase is likely to attract significant opposition.
- Interest rates will remain at zero for graduates earning less than £21,000.
- The report proposes wiping out student debts after 30 years

compared to 25 at present.

- Maximum maintenance grants would rise from £2,906 to £3,250 with the income cut off remaining at £25,000.
- Students should be able to apply for small grants if household income is below £60,000.
- Part time students would be eligible for the first time for loans for their fees.

University Admissions

- It proposes an increase in the number of university places; a 10 per cent increase over three years.
- This rise should however reflect demand from students instead of being imposed across the board.
- No cap on numbers of students at university; popular universities can expand whilst others may be forced to close.
- Only students who meet minimum entry criteria in terms of UCAS points - which will be set by the Government - will be eligible for state funded loans.
- Universities which charge over £7,000 would be scrutinized closely by the Government over widening access to poorer pupils.

Government funding

- It proposes an 80 percent cut in the teaching grant to universities; demonstrating a slight fall in their overall income if universities charged fees of £6,000, and a slight rise if they all charged £7,000.
- Government funding stripped for all university courses except “priority” subjects such as medicine, science, certain languages and engineering.

University system

- A Higher Education Council to be established to replace four existing higher education bodies: the Higher Education Funding Council for England, Quality Assurance Agency, Office for Fair Access, and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.
- All new academics who will teach should undergo teaching training.

Comment Sean Ruston, SU Education Officer

With inflated house prices, unprecedented levels of graduate unemployment and shortages of universities places, the implementation of the review would be the latest in a long line of ills our generation has to suffer due to the profligacy of the baby-boomers.

While in the sixties the same generation that are now reaching retirement reacted to disenfranchisement

with mass action and cultural revolution, we seem oddly silent in the face of this onslaught. Are we too caught up helping Simon Cowell make money to care as our future is put in jeopardy?

We shouldn’t give up hope. Browne’s recommendations cannot be brought to parliament in one white paper but will take a long parliamentary process to implement. At

the same time the University of Warwick will take many months to fully decide upon its strategy for responding to the changes.

These processes will affect the shape of Warwick, and Higher Education more generally, for decades to come.

If we mobilise successfully, produce credible alternatives to the market system and show that stu-

dents can and will stand up for themselves then we can have a real impact on Warwick’s future and play a big role in helping the NUS fight back against Browne.

‘Warwick SU puts its foot down’ - our campaign against cuts and higher fees seeks to do exactly that and I urge you to get involved in some of the actions we’re planning over the coming months.

The first date for you diary is Tuesday 19th October when at 5pm in the Atrium we’re holding a Big Debate about Browne with NUS National President Aaron Porter.

The other thing you can do is to buy a ticket at www.warwicksu.com/demo2010 in order to come to the NUS national demonstration on the 10th November in central London.

One World Week goes back to basics

Charlotte Duffield

As preparations for the 16th annual One World Week get underway, support for the event appears to be mixed following last year's controversy surrounding the event's sponsorship and management.

Last year Chris Rossdale created a Facebook group entitled 'Warwick students fed up with One World Week', which attracted more than 300 members. Rossdale was prompted to

"One World Week may become a cruel parody of itself"

Chris Rossdale

create the group due to the revelation that one of the major sponsors, Barclays, holds £7 billion of shares in the arms trade. Rossdale felt such sponsorship indicated how the event "has moved far from its original aims" of, according to the One World Week mission statement, inspiring a 'view based on acceptance and appreciation of the world's mosaic of cultures.' He added that the "corporatism of the event overshadows much of what members want to achieve."

Conor Rooney, one of the co-ordinators of this year's event acknowledged that the sponsorship from

Barclays induced "negative criticism", and maintained they "won't be sponsoring us this year". "We want to encourage debate and one of our forum talks is on the topic of corporate social responsibility", he added. Chris Sury, fellow co-ordinator, commented that "it's a lot harder to highlight arts and events without a corporate sponsor; events in the Copper Rooms wouldn't happen at all. We don't receive money from the Union. It allows us to maintain scale and provide access to a wide range of students."

Rossdale also emphasised how the escalation of protest was induced by the "top-down culture" of last year's event. "The response of the leadership confirmed our initial disappointment", he commented, arguing that ordinary members of One World Week should have been "more involved in decision-making." Rooney stated that "this year we have shrunk One World Week, and are actually a lot smaller than several years ago."

"We are hoping to be a bit more sensible in how we communicate with students; thankfully the megaphone has been banned this year," he added.

A further source of contention was the allegedly stereotypical, excessive and glamorised representation of cultures. This year's co-ordinators stressed a particular emphasis on the collaboration with different cultural societies, maintaining a desire for



» One World Week is to become less corporate and more culturally orientated this year in response to critics

"different society members to depict their own cultures" and a "focus on quality rather than quantity." One World Week will host a launch party in association with Oxfam in which all profits will go to charity, as well as a weeklong festival in the Atrium, fo-

cusing on cultural issues from around the world. Rooney expressed that this year's event aimed to stimulate personal development and showcase the talents of Warwick's cultural and performance societies, adding that "they make One World Week – not

just the exec."

Despite such intentions, Rossdale expressed the opinion that if the "hierarchical mentality of its organisation" continues, One World Week may become a "cruel parody of itself."

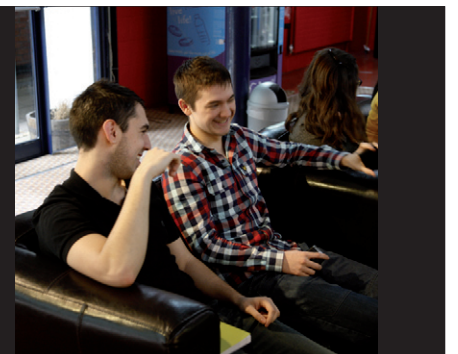


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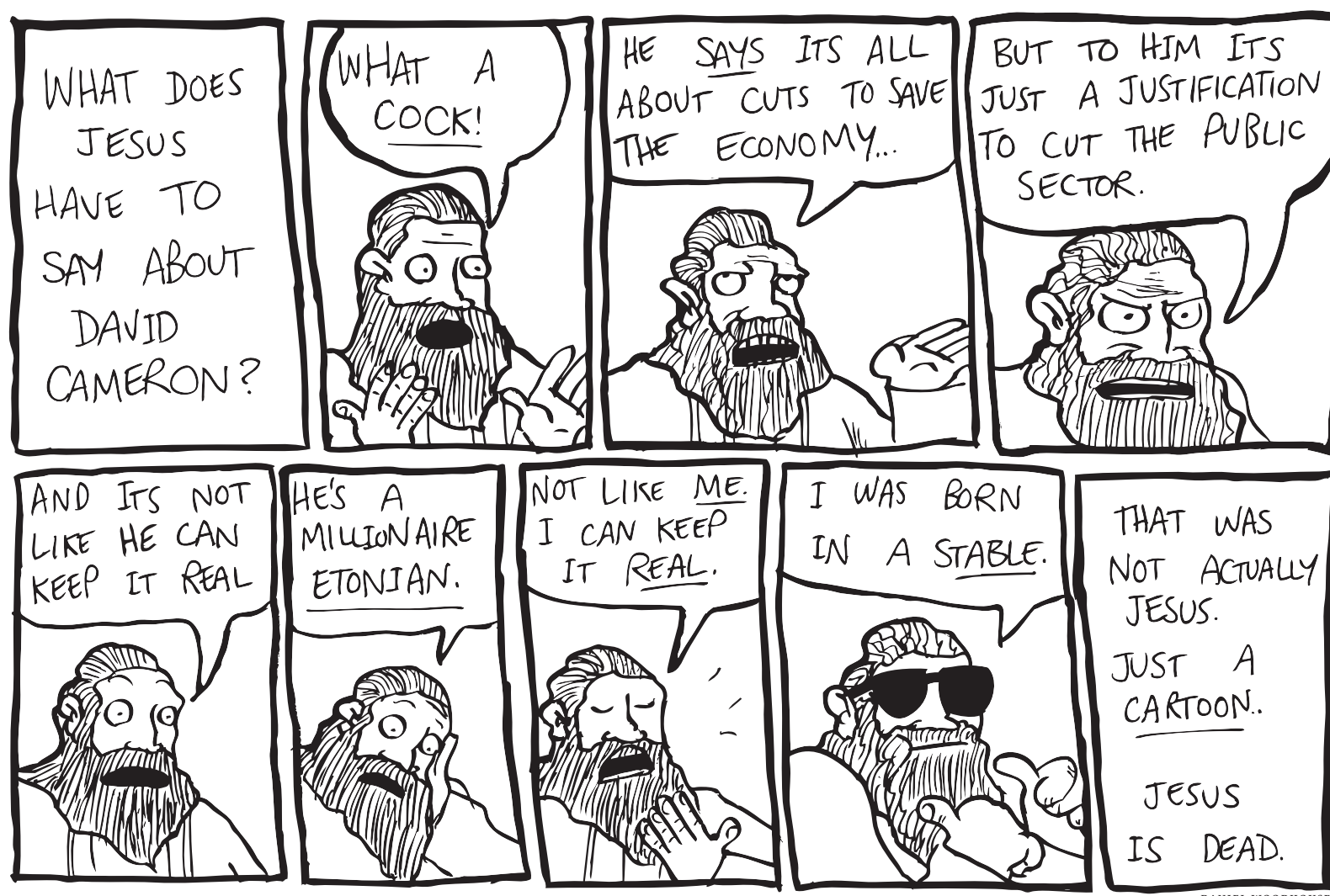
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Comment



DANIEL WOODHOUSE

Cameron's benefit fraud

Carl Andrew

With his first Prime Minister's question at the pulpit as leader of the opposition, Ed Miliband, Labour's newly elected leader, used the opportunity to attack the coalition on their benefit policies. With a hard-nosed line, the coalition has announced plans to cut child benefits for higher rate taxpayers. David Cameron has defended the cuts, saying that higher earners need to help towards cutting the deficit as well.

The plan put forward by the Conservatives involves cutting child benefits for those families with at least one parent earning over £44,000. Announced at the Conservative conference, this has taken the government's cost-cutting operation to the next level. Families are now suffering at the hand of this ludicrous attempt to reduce the cost of benefits.

This is a further attempt by the coalition to cut the cost of government and it is another hastily thrown together and badly thought out idea. It is also a major U-turn by a government who claimed throughout the election campaign that they would not cut benefits.

The coalition is yet again putting the cost of government and their saving agenda ahead of the welfare of the country and some of its poorest and most deprived citizens. Child benefits are a huge help to many families who need that little extra economic advantage and this plan will make child benefits unfairly distributed and simply take money from those who need it most.

Cuts are meant to hit everyone but at the moment it seems they are hitting families and the middle income earners the hardest. This is an unfair attack on a section of society that the Conservatives aimed to appeal to in the general election.

Far from walking on eggshells, the government is administering some of the biggest and harshest cuts this country has seen in a century. They are slashing departments in all areas of the UK without a second thought, all in the name of cost-cutting and budget reduction.

David Cameron says that we are all in this together and need to cooperate to reduce the deficit, but when cuts hit poorer people the hardest, his words start to appear a bit hollow.

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The world sleeps as Palestine is strangled

Burc Kostem

"The connection between the Jewish people and Jerusalem cannot be denied. The Jewish people were building Jerusalem 3000 years ago and the Jewish people are building Jerusalem today. Jerusalem is not a settlement. It's our capital." You'd think Netanyahu could not have made his position clearer in March this year when he spoke for the American Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), but somehow the international community and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) gave the negotiators the benefit of the doubt when they hoped anything new would come out of the peace talks. No, Netanyahu doesn't care if the international community and the International Court of Justice think the settlements are illegal. And no one is asking him the fate of the 500,000 Israelis already living in illegal settlements in the West Bank

and in East Jerusalem.

We are back to level zero once more. Mahmoud Abbas (Chairman of the PLO) is barely resisting the mounting Palestinian calls to end the peace talks altogether because of the settlement issue, and the Arab League has supported Abbas' decision to at least freeze them for the moment. It seems that the peacetalks have stalled for now. So what happens in the occupied territories and indeed in Gaza when nothing is happening at the negotiation table?

According to *Haaretz* a liberal Israeli newspaper, the Israeli settlement plan costs them \$17 billion to maintain, which is a crippling amount for them. Israel had been building settlements throughout Palestine before the Six-Day War, they were building settlements throughout the occupied territories during the Oslo Accords and they are building settlements today.

So we all knew that, but what else is happening? Every passing day, every passing hour, when nothing is

happening on this side of the wall, on every corner of the occupied territories thousands of Palestinians are being subjected to an increasing number of rules and regulations that are designed to turn their life into living hell. A "Bureaucracy of Evil", as Ilan Pappé calls it, is feeding on the

What happens in the occupied territories and indeed in Gaza when nothing is happening at the negotiation tables

miseries of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories. The Nasser family living in East Jerusalem is a textbook example. Despite having ownership documents of their house dating back to 1924, they are faced with destruction orders from the Israeli forces and are refused access to electricity, water and roads. But this is just the tip of the iceberg. Everything the Palestinian people do - the

water they drink, how much ground they can dig for farming, simply crossing a check point - brings constant authorisation, regulation and subsequent harassment by the occupying forces. You simply can't justify any of these measures by any rational security concerns.

What does all of this have to do with the current peace talks? It poses one simple question. Should the international community silently sit by waiting for the peace talks to bring a final solution to everything, while the situation in the West Bank and Gaza is worsened everyday? The fight for the liberation of the Palestinian people is not only fought on negotiation tables but on the streets of Ramallah, Hebron, al Bireh, East Jerusalem. It is fought by Palestinians in every other corner of the world. Perhaps it's time we listened to what these people have to say...

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THE BOAR

Fight back against fees

The recommendations in the Browne report risk destroying our Higher Education system

This paper denounces the Browne Review's recommendations and the Government's reaction to them.

Browne's advocacy of creating a competitive market in higher education would force students to choose courses based on cost rather than academic suitability and risks shifting the focus of higher education from the needs of students to the need to make a profit. Browne also suggests a drop in overall university income even after the introduction of higher fees, saying this would drive efficiency. These suggestions are dangerous and misguided.

Competition in public services increases not quality, but inequality. Introducing competition to higher education contradicts the Government's role in levelling the playing field and ensuring that the less privileged are not left behind.

The Browne Review aside, the scrapping of £4.2 billion in teaching and research funding will destroy the entire idea of public education and completely ignores its economic and social value.

Warwick would be able to charge fees high enough to pay its teaching costs, so the cuts will not affect us as much. The problem remains, however, of the tens of thousands of pounds in debt that would be incurred by students, which would deter prospective students, especially those from poorer backgrounds.

Additionally, targeting the small amount of remaining government teaching subsidy at "priority" subjects risks marginalising other subjects, leaving many students paying more for less. As the National Union of Students points out, increases in fees in the UK and in the USA have never been commensurate with an increase in student satisfaction or teaching quality, as funds go instead towards construction projects, administration and research rather than lectures and seminars.

These are the risks that would be run by adopting Browne's recommendations. The prospect of higher debt will drive poorer students away from universities, making higher education once again the

preserve of the privileged few. Even the strongest support mechanisms would not be enough to dispel the spectre of 30 years' worth of debt after graduation. Withdrawing funds from teaching risks losing dozens of less prestigious universities who nonetheless perform a vital role in educating young people. It also risks forcing departmental closures across the higher education sector.

We students must take action to oppose these changes in the hope that their sting may not be as sharp as it appears. We should all take part in the Students' Union's campaign, and if possible attend the national demonstration on the 10th November. We need to stand united and send a strong message to government and university leadership that cuts of 80 per cent are unacceptable, as are rises of thousands of pounds in tuition fees.

Education is a public good, and government is responsible for supporting it. Instead, this government has declared war on students, and it is our job to fight back.

Every little helps

Short on cash? Have fun the frugal way – it's much more rewarding... honest

As busy as we have been getting the paper together, it's still deplorable that we failed to inform you in a timely manner of Frugal Fun Day, an October celebration that tries to take the hard cash out of having fun. Apologies aside, FF Day (as it's fondly termed) is a splendid cause. It attempts to controvert the notion that you have to empty your pockets and spend the tenner you found on the floor on cinema tickets, alcohol or Topshop to reach that zenith of human delight.

Frugalfun.com has some suggestions, including picking some apples from the orchard, performing at a Renaissance fair or (rather bizarrely) watching a court trial. If you're lacking an orchard, a nearby historical festival or a fiendishly voyeuristic temperament, then the *Boar* has some suggestions for you and has also provided you with the mate-

rial to perform them. Using only the pages of this hefty, well-respected tome, it is possible to fill those idle Sundays without wanting to chew your own face off with boredom.

Suggestion one: After a thorough reading of the *Boar*, crumple it up into a spherical shape and kick it around a few times. There. You've made yourself a football.

Suggestion two: Get a few copies of the *Boar* and use them as placemats. Then hold a dinner party. No food? Eat the paper.

Suggestion three: Steal some fish and chips. Wrap them up in an old copy of the *Boar*. Enjoy the old-fashioned amusement of eating fish and chips in newspaper. You'll be taken back to 1930s Brighton.

Suggestion four: Roll the centre page of the *Boar* into a cone. Sello-tape together. Now you've got a witch's hat for Halloween.

Suggestion five: Go on a scavenging hunt around the university to find old copies of the *Boar*. Once you have a thousand or so copies, build a tower out of them by the Students' Union. Set them alight and stage a protest about university cuts and changes to tuition fees. You'll get many people joining you. Everybody loves a good bonfire at three in the afternoon.

Seriously though, with the cost of university set to rise within the next few years and the lack of jobs around for graduates, it's likely that young people will have to be spending many more Sundays as Fun Frugal Days. If you've got any ideas about how to have fun whilst conserving the pennies, we want to hear them. Send your suggestions in on the back of a postcard or email comment@theboar.org. We'll print the best in next week's edition.

T ê t e - à - t ê t e

The issue

Browne Report



The controversial Browne report, commissioned by the previous Labour Party, has interviewed 36 witnesses, received submissions from 150 universities and colleges and totalled 2,000 pages of evidence. This evidence has been used to formulate what Lord Browne sees as the best way to take tuition fees and university funding forward.

As well as focusing on the most anticipated topic, tuition fees, the report called for a number of changes to different areas of student fees and finance.

The main call is for the tuition fees cap to be scrapped, with a recommended fee of £6000. It is ultimately up to the University to choose what they charge but if a university decides to charge more than £6000, they will be hit by a tapered levy. This will ensure that those that charge the most contribute more to supporting the poorest students.

Graduates will only begin repaying when they reach annual earnings of over £21,000 a year, up from £15,000 under the current system. Lord Browne also recommends a 10 per cent increase in student places over the next four years to allow more students to go to university.

In attempted changes to the way living loans and grants work, Browne recommends combining the Student Finance and UCAS applications so that they are one easy online application, due to the complexity of two systems. This will be administered by UCAS.

It has been suggested that the maintenance loan should be changed to a non means-tested flat rate of £3,750. A grant system will offer families earning below £60,000 extra support in the form of grants up to £3,250. They also want to scrap the compulsory payments given to students as a grant by the university and include it in the student loan to avoid different universities giving different amounts.

Send us an email to have your say on this week's article:
comment@theboard.org

Should the tuition fee cap be raised?

Yes: The current cap stifles diversity and quality in English universities

Paul Stoddart

Defending higher tuition fee caps in a student paper will likely destroy the friendships I currently claim: all two of them. However, popularity has never been a perfect measure of an argument's merits and this is no exception.

Those resisting higher tuition fees have argued that the move would lead to an exclusion of poorer students from university. However, the structure of fees currently allows students to cover them with loans and pay back gradually once they are earning £15,000 or more. Therefore, it is only after graduating that the individual pays the fees. A top-performing graduate from a poor background could realistically be earning more than someone from a wealthier family. The unemployed graduate pays absolutely no fees. As such, poorer students should not be discouraged by higher fees under the current system.

The major factor preventing the less wealthy from entering university is primary education. Poor children suffer from reduced opportunity, as schools in relatively deprived areas often have worse educational records. Many of these children never make it to university, but end up paying taxes that pay for the tuition of university students who had better opportunities from birth. Higher fees transfer the burden from the taxpayer to the beneficiary. The diverted tax revenues could be directed at increasing equality of opportunity for poor students at an earlier stage.

Many of the arguments against raising tuition fee caps seem obsessed with the impact on students, overlooking the broader picture. The government is currently trying to reduce the national debt after the bailout of the financial industry. Regardless of whether the bailouts were justified, the government has spent the money and has less to give elsewhere. I'm all for funding education. More educated societies are more prosperous and tend to have less crime. But central government has to fund healthcare, defence, policing and so on. Cuts in every one of these areas are likely to be necessary to hit government targets (whatever we think of them). Given that cuts must be made, universities need replacement funding. Expecting students to contribute some of that extra funding seems reasonable. The vice-chancellor of Glasgow University, Anton Muscatelli, agreed with this assessment in an interview on BBC Scotland where he floated the idea of graduate contributions in Scotland where tuition is free.

Students at universities around the

world would struggle to comprehend the outrage in England if they found out about our current fee cap. The average annual tuition fee at a private American university is \$26,273 (£16,544). The University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), a public university with a similar reputation to Warwick, has domestic tuition rates of \$9,402 (£5,918). In addition to charging higher fees, UCLA has cut classes and reduced the hours its library operates in response to funding cuts. If Warwick and other English universities want to avoid such cutbacks, they need to fill the void left by government cuts, with some of that contribution coming from students. Without this, Warwick and English universities cannot maintain competitiveness with universities that do. Leading academics cannot work for free. They also need funding to conduct research. If they can't get it here, they will find it elsewhere. Lose the leading thinkers and you can wave goodbye to your 'world-leading' reputations. And yes, that will affect how your degree comes to

Students around the world would struggle to comprehend the outrage in England if they found out about our current fee cap

be viewed by employers.

Universities should provide environments of diversity and liberal thinking. The plan to limit tuition fees at the current level threatens this in English universities. Warwick's fees for Non-EU students will be £12,325 in 2011/2012. Preventing universities from acquiring funds through EU students will force international fees beyond these already expensive rates.

This could divert international students away from English universities. Without the best international students, our universities will lose competitiveness and undergraduates will not benefit from interacting with different cultures; 'One Country Week' is unlikely to succeed like 'One World Week'.

If students want England to maintain top quality universities offering opportunities to students, rich and poor, they should support a rise in tuition fees. The current opposition to fees seems, for the most part, to come from students and the NUS. Spot the vested interest. I can sympathise: paying higher fees doesn't appeal to me, but losing diversity and quality from English universities appeals to me even less.

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No: Raising the cap on tuition fees will sacrifice equality in the name of competition

Joseph O'Leary

There is an awful lot of useless drivel going around trying to justify both maintaining the tuition fee cap and abolishing fees altogether. Well this is the Boar, and we'll have none of that tripe here. Let me tell you why I think the current cap should remain.

To begin with, let's look at taxation and government spending. A common argument in favour of fees – and in this case higher fees than ever before – is that they direct payments to graduates, who actually benefit from university in the first place, rather than taxpayers who in general have other needs and concerns. In a time of economic hardship, they say, the graduates themselves have all the more responsibility to shoulder the burden of their own privileges.

In my view this argument suffers from two damaging kinds of bias. Firstly, the argument has an individualist bias. Society as a whole benefits indirectly from the existence of graduates in the skilled workplace, and when assessing the distribution of collective contributions such as taxation, one should have a collectivist and not an individualist conception of who benefits.

Secondly, the argument has a consequentialist bias. While only graduates directly benefit through actually having degrees, everyone benefits from the mere existence of the opportunity to acquire one. The State should use public funds to create public opportunities. Whether or not everybody actually takes the opportunity is irrelevant. The opportunity should be there and we all owe the State the means to provide it.

Finally, on the subject of spending, we also hear arguments about the Government's other commitments particularly at a time when the economy is in a sticky mess. We are presented with the assumption that cuts must be made and students must make up the shortfall. Yet we spend only 1.3 per cent of GDP on tertiary education, according to the OECD, less than an OECD average of 1.5 per cent. We happen to spend about 2.4 per cent of GDP on Defence, way more than most other EU states, including Germany (who cope just fine with what they have). I won't digress too much, but it does pose the question as to whether we are punching above our weight militarily and below our weight on adult education.

The next major beef people have is with incentives. Arguments in favour of higher fees tend to point out that the intuitive counter-incentive of a big fat price tag is in fact false because repayment structures post-education

mean only relatively high earners pay anything substantial. Again, I find two niggling issues with this argument.

Firstly, whether or not an incentive is justified by facts is irrelevant. The process of mounting up a staggering amount of debt in the first place has both an immediate 'scare-effect' and also a more sinister acquaintance with debt into the future. This may be fluffy psychology to some but it is all too true for a huge number of prospective students and families who, if they are not put off Higher Education altogether, will be forced into a hugely constrictive system where debt is forced and financial options are considerably limited both for the present and for the future.

That at least some people can be

Less well-off students may be drawn into less expensive institutions, vice-versa for more well-off students

pushed around by incentives generates the second issue. The effective marketization of Higher Education brought about by the removal of the cap can lead to a sinister tier-based system. Less well-off students may be drawn to less expensive institutions, vice-versa for more well-off students. What we may well find ourselves with is a system where income-groups become separated based on perceived affordability – a social stigma both due to a loss of class diversity within universities and a gulf in the quality of services offered by the likes of Oxbridge compared with other institutions.

Incentives also go deeper than mere institution choice. Thousands of students will opt for shorter degree courses and choose to stay at home rather than paying the additional costs of longer degrees and hefty maintenance bills. Both decisions, while saving money, can give students sub-optimal university experiences. In fact, an unsung benefit of free education from an early age is that it allows many of us to get a good education and have a good time without having to bear the full brunt of financial reality until adulthood.

So as far as the superficial attraction of 'improving competitiveness' is concerned, I think the above point explains adequately how the underlying effects of such a policy can be as socially deleterious as they are unfair. I for one would gladly sacrifice some competitiveness to live in a more equal society, and that isn't achieved by the Browne Review.

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**Chris O'Brien's
Two Penn'orth****Tuition fees and the
democratic deficit**

If tuition fees go up to £7000 a year it won't just be a sad day for education, but also for democracy. The whole policy process has been a conspiracy against the public. The last Labour government commissioned a report which would not conclude until after the election... how convenient. No politicians in Labour would talk about it except to say "I think we should wait for the conclusion of the Browne report."

Gordon Brown must wish he had organised a review into how to deal with the deficit now as well. How better to kick an issue into the long grass. Except that, who did they think they were kidding? Then you could enact the policy midterm when the public couldn't stop you. Everyone knew it was going to recommend putting up tuition fees, but they could pretend to be open-minded about the issue. We could have an election about Cleggmania and Jillian Duffy instead.

I remember watching TV debates with other students and everyone cheering whenever Nick Clegg spoke. The Liberal Democrats were the only party which pledged not to support an increase in fees. As recently as April Clegg said, "The Liberal Democrats are different. We will oppose any lifting of the cap." Now that picture of him with his signed pledge to end tuition fees has come back to haunt him, even on the Liberal Democrat website. Vote Clegg get Cameron cuts and betrayal.

We have had an election in which the parties refused to talk about the Browne report and many students supported a party which had pledged to defend their interests. The public has either been ignored and treated as idiots or betrayed when it has come to this issue. If some anarchists want to do something equally undemocratic in response, like occupy some lecture theatres, have some rent strikes or clamp our chancellor Richard Lambert's Jaguar with a £7000 parking ticket then I think I will have to support them.

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Chris O'Brien is the Boar's comment editor

*We want your views! Email us at
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Selective rage: Sakineh's execution

We need a rethink of civil society as we try to prevent human rights abuses worldwide

Leonardo Goi

At the point of publication, Sakineh Mohammad Ash-tani might have already been hanged. At present, the 43-year-old Iranian woman accused of both adultery and of plotting her husband's assassination is waiting for Iran's Judiciary Court to have its final say. It is recent news that Sakineh's son, her attorney and two German reporters have been arrested in Tabriz. Tehran justified the arrest saying the two were fake foreign reporters. Regardless of whether this be the case, Sakineh's fate has now become a matter of international concern and diplomatic conflict.

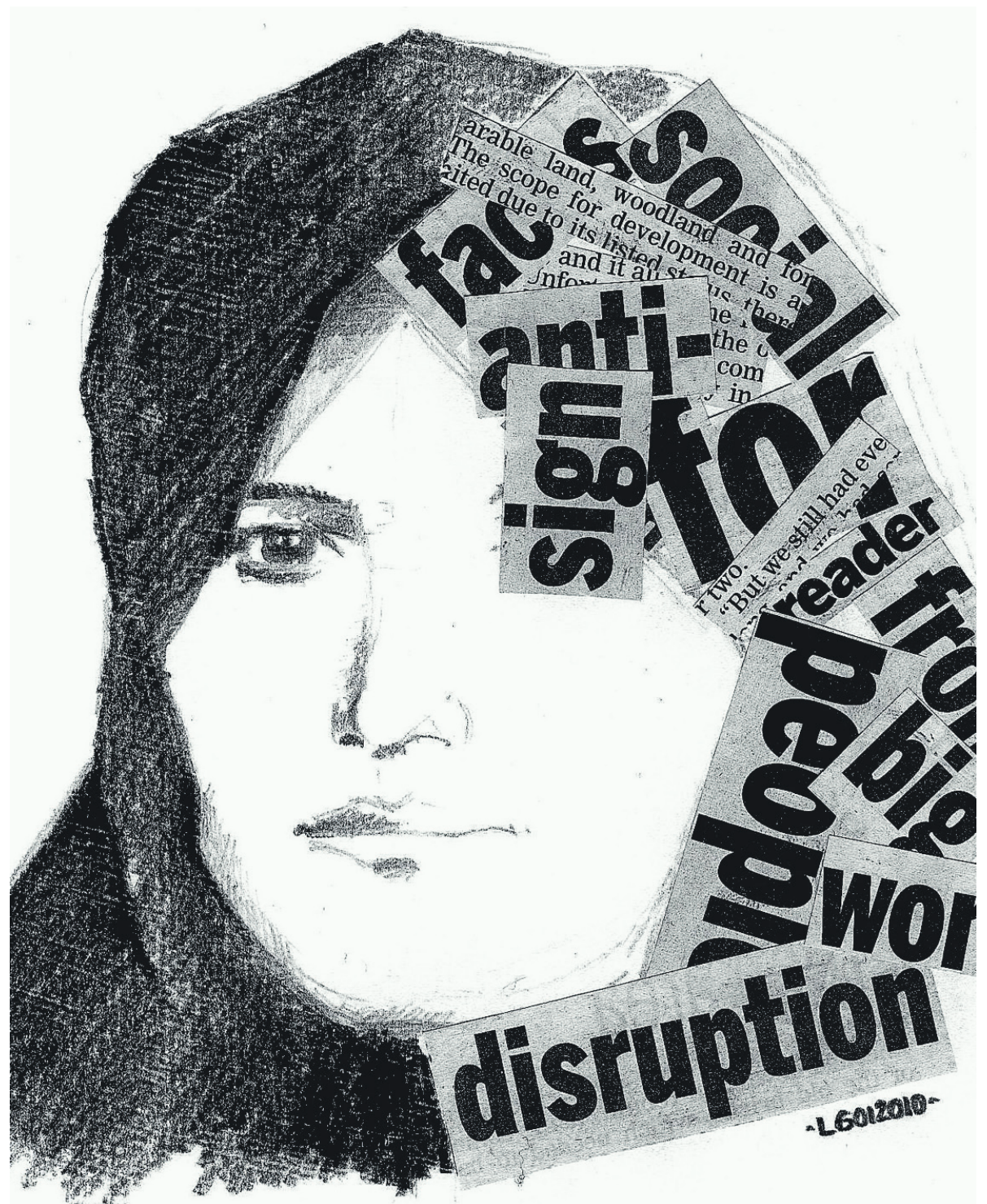
Google Sakineh and you will find out what I mean. Freesakineh.org says Sakineh had already received 99 lashes in 2006 after being convicted of having an illicit relationship with two men. The situation deteriorated rapidly, as this July Sakineh was further convicted of adultery and sentenced to death by stoning.

It is at this stage that we, as members of a civil society, come into play. Let us go back to the basics: civil society is the idea that within a community there may be a specific section which, through mass protests, groups, organizations, works to put forward ideas aimed at ameliorating our world.

Let's get back to the basics: civil society works to put forward ideas aimed at ameliorating our world

The pressure exerted on Iran's Judiciary court by ordinary civilians was incredible. Freesakineh.org registers, at present, over 348,000 signatures. There are countless Facebook groups which ask for her freedom. Western leaders and prominent thinkers contributed to stir up public indignation. After speaking out for Sakineh, Carla Bruni received the "compliments" of pro-Ahmadinejad newspaper Kayhan which called her "a prostitute". French philosopher Bernard-Henri Lévy personally interviewed Sakineh's former attorney. The EU itself, through the European Union Foreign Affairs chief Catherine Ashton expressed its deep concern about Sakineh's inhuman execution.

And now to the results. What did all our mass-protests come to? Sakineh will not be stoned. Should there be no last-minute change, she will be hanged this week. I am in no position to judge our efforts negatively; I think no one is. I decided to include in this article a broad idea of civil society because I wanted to be sure all of us could understand how much we can do to change the conduct of states. Whatever the outcome may be, Sakineh's case has further highlighted how much the increase in in-



ternational media coverage and our improved awareness can do. Even what seems to be the smallest of victories – a change of execution – must be regarded as a great achievement or at the very least, a starting point.

And now for something different. Teresa Lewis was a 41-year-old woman from Pittsylvania County, Virginia. Lewis was executed on September 23rd after being convicted of the murder of her son and husband, both killed to get their \$ 250,000 life insurance. You may wonder why I switched from Sakineh's case to that of an American psychopath. The switch is not mine. The connection between the two came out from the Iranian press. More specifically, out of MP Hossein Naghavi, who, on September 21st, denounced the lack of coherence in the rationale of both Washington and the international community's condemnation of Sakineh's execution. Teresa Lewis was proven to be mentally disabled

and despite this, sentenced to death. Sakineh has become, in a matter of weeks, a martyr of freedom and universal human rights. All we heard of Teresa Lewis, during the seven years leading up to her death, was silence.

I believe it is impossible to take a side on the issue. What I am doing now is risky: I am comparing two women from radically different backgrounds, united by a death sentence which nonetheless seems, in both cases, unjust. However, I am willing to stir up the hornet's nest for a reason which is in line with our idea of civil society. Because being a member of a civil society requires us firstly to question society itself. There are many other Sakinehs in the world – Teresa Lewis is just one example.

Perhaps the best point to start reflecting on could be the silence of the American media. Could it not be the case that our anger has been strummentalized for political purposes?

What is certain is that civil society is a growing reality. Mass-protests are effective, independent of what will be the outcome of Sakineh's case. Perhaps what was originally the basis of our indignation (the barbaric execution of a woman under a theocratic regime) has been slowly contaminated by the impact of the media upon the whole matter. Is this our fault? No, but we surely have the power (and the right) to question what we read. This is at the basis of any putative civil society, and our first duty as its members.

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I Have something to say about the use of the death penalty in Iran and the US?

Discuss: theboar.org/comment

Is “fairness” the new placebo of politics?

This word is devoid of meaning but it makes people feel better about decisions which are bitter to swallow

Jonathan Stone

Politicians need to stop pandering to our childish instincts to moan about ‘unfairness’.

Of all the catchphrases and buzzwords in the politician’s formidable arsenal of platitudes, talk about ‘fairness’ is overwhelmingly the favourite in these times. One doesn’t need to look too far to find evidence of this ‘fairness’ epidemic. The Liberal Democrats are committed to ‘fair’ votes; the Conservatives assure us public spending cuts and tax rises will be done ‘fairly’ and Labour, of course, promised a tantalising utopia of ‘a future fair for all’. The disagreeable thing about the proliferation of ‘fairness’ is precisely that it is just so agreeable. Where people might take issue with detailed policies about spending cuts or the values driving, or in some cases inhibiting, those cuts, very few would disagree with a plan to reduce the deficit that’s categorically ‘fair’. Overuse and lack of clarity has stripped the term of any

utility it once might have had, as bitter pills are deliberately sugar coated with delicious ‘fairness’. In doing so, politicians are able to couch their potentially contentious ideological motivations in the agreeable, sunshine and rainbows rhetoric of ‘fairness’.

When it comes to fairness we usually all have our own self-interest at heart. In the absence of detail, we automatically interpret the many assurances of ‘fairness’ in a way that conforms to our individual sense of what that should be. A perfect illustration of this is the recent furor over child benefits. When the fantasies of fair cuts were rudely shattered by the painful reality of exactly what these would entail, there was predictable backlash. Many married couples earning just over £40,000 failed to see the fairness in a reduction of their benefits when their cohabiting neighbours earning £80,000 remained unaffected. Similarly, a perfectly legitimate case will no doubt be put forward in these very pages that Lord Browne’s controversial plans to lift the cap on tuition fees is unfair to students. It is doubtful, though,

whether the hard pressed taxpayer, faced with the prospect of continuing to subsidise the higher education of even the wealthiest of students, will as readily join in the chorus of condemnation reverberating throughout Student Unions across the country.

When it comes to fairness we usually all have our own self-interest at heart

The scale of the anger towards policies touted as ‘fair’ is understandable when you consider the different assumptions and values lurking behind its various definitions. Last week the Equality and Human Rights Commission published a report entitled ‘How Fair is Britain?’ The report hopes to set the “agenda for fairness” for the government and details in over 700 pages the need to “close significant equality gaps”. For those not wishing to read the equivalent of War and Peace, only with tales of national heroism replaced with income

deciles, the report can be summarised thus: Britain has become a land of greater opportunity over the last fifty years, though glaring gaps in income between the poorest and the richest still exist. The implicit assumption behind the report is that the fair society towards which we strive would not tolerate discrepancies such as the net wealth of the top ten percent of households being valued at one hundred times more than the poorest ten percent. The underlying assumption is that the closer we come to equality of outcome, the fairer our society will be.

This contrasts noticeably with David Cameron’s speech at the Conservative Party Conference in which he defined fairness as “giving people what they deserve – and what people deserve depends on how they behave.” These values are being put into practice through welfare reform, which will ensure that even the lowest paid job will be more eligible than unemployment. Although these measures are supported by the majority of the population, they are unlikely to tick many boxes on the

EHRC’s “agenda for fairness”. In the debate about the scale and speed of public spending cuts, which will undoubtedly be the defining argument of the next five years, the concept of ‘fairness’ has become ideologically charged.

There is a gulf, then, between the public’s understanding of what they consider to be fair and the reality behind what is actually meant when it is mentioned by politicians. The reaction to the Browne Report and the plan to scrap child benefit are recent examples of this and accusations of ‘unfairness’ will continue to abound once the Comprehensive Spending Review is unveiled. In the current climate of prostration before the altar of ‘fairness’, its constant evocation is at best confusing and at worst misleading and deceptive. Instead of attempting to soothe us with platitudes about ‘fairness’, it would be infinitely preferable for some refreshing honesty about the real values and motivations behind the plans for cuts. It’s only fair.

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A Star-spangled university?

Sam Maule compares his experience of education at Warwick to Berkley

Sam Maule

My experience of the higher education system, limited now to two universities (across six departments), probably shouldn’t allow me to make broad statements juxtaposing two countries’ entire education systems. However, as my experience is around double that of the typical undergraduate, this is what I will try to do.

Since arriving at UC Berkeley in August, now having completed seven weeks of the ‘Fall Semester’ and successfully negotiating my first set of ‘midterms’, I feel I can begin to reflect on the merits of the education systems either side of the Atlantic.

The one thing which has staggered me about the American college system is the vast degree of flexibility it allows. This stems from their higher education system which is much less rigid than our A Level system and requires students to study a wide range of subjects before they can graduate from high school. When applying for universities, most will allow you to apply as an ‘undeclared major’, which means that first year students do not have to decide their subject of study until they have completed one year of university, and indeed this is commonly done.

This is a great strength of the US system, and exposes a major weakness of A Levels. Asking 16 year olds to choose only three or four subjects to study can make students extremely narrow-minded and can consider-

ably reduce a student’s skill set. This is amplified by the fact that universities are requiring higher grades every year, and as such, students will increasingly choose their A levels based on what they are best at. So for the mathematically minded, the choice of subjects could read: Maths, Further Maths, Physics and Chemistry (which incidentally is not far off my choice), and I think you would agree that this is unlikely to create a well-rounded individual and vastly reduces degree options to boot. Even as early as GCSEs, some children can choose to drop what would be considered as core subjects in the United States; indeed I haven’t formally studied history since I was 14.

However, there are downsides to the US university system and I have found myself frequently frustrated with some of the nuances between the two countries. The super-sized culture of the US not only applies to their food, but also to their education system. For those subjects where reading is a major requirement, there is a great deal of reading, and due to the frequency of testing it can’t be skipped. While this is great insofar as students are learning a great deal of facts and ideas, it can neglect what in my opinion is fundamental to education; the ability to think for yourself. The testing in the US is much more focused on the regurgitation of facts, definitions and other peoples’ opinions, and less on independent learning and development of your own thoughts which endangers the ability to think for oneself. I have been fre-

quently frustrated by this.

As you know, the English university system, whilst far from being perfect, places much more emphasis on independent learning and allows a great deal more room for originality of thought. This is not only in itself a more rewarding experience than trying to memorise 400 lecture slides for a midterm, but also gives better preparation for life after education, when thinking for yourself is the most fundamental skill you can learn.

Another strength of Warwick, which may come as a surprise to some people, is how much more personal an experience it is. Since arriving at Berkeley I have not been given a personal tutor, nor have I had any seminars excepting my French class. I know the typical student at Warwick probably only speaks to their personal tutor once a term, if that, but for many it can be a valuable resource and should be cherished as such. Seminars can also be fairly awkward affairs at the best of times, but having spent barely three months in the American system, I already miss them.

There are great frustrations in the English system which are only amplified by the economic climate, but we should be proud of the university education system we currently have. While tuition fees may be rising, we still pay far less than the typical American undergraduate, and having been on either side of the fence, I can tell you we get a far better deal.

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Money

North Korea: heir unapparent

Alex Pashley investigates the Korean succession

Alex Pashley

In Pyongyang on October 10th, North Korea extended a surprise invitation to the world's media to pry in on a major military parade, marking the 65th anniversary of its Workers' Party. A rare event in a state veiled from view of the West, its intention was less to showcase the nation's might of missiles and goose-stepping soldiers, but that of one young debutant, a fresh-faced Kim Jong-un.

A dictator-in-waiting; the youngest son of the ailing Kim Jong-Il took centre stage beside his father applauding and saluting the martial procession before him. State television assured such events achieved blanket coverage to the screens of the 22 million Koreans the regime controls. However, astride a private Swiss education and a suspected age of around 27, very little is known of the heir apparent. Distinct from its usual shadowy methods, this time the government's motives of Kim Jong-un's unveiling are clear.

Having been appointed to a four star general last month and to second in command on the regime's Central Military Commission the young Kim's sudden rise to prominence has signalled dynastic succession to be increasingly likely. Kim Jong-Il, 68, is widely suspected to have suffered a stroke in 2008 and his increasing frailty; seen reaching to the balcony for support during the parade has cemented the party's concern with consolidating the future. Nevertheless his startling rise to the upper

echelons of the party is at odds with the meticulous twenty year grooming Kim Jong-Il received before taking the mantle on the death of his predecessor, the 'eternal' President Kim Il-Sung in 1994.

The party's inner circle has wasted no time in calming the nerves of a hierarchy sceptical of an inexperienced leader. Kim Jong-Il's sister, Kim Kyong Hui has been promoted to four star general and her husband Chang Sung-Taek was in June instated as vice chairman of the National Defence Commission; a role inferior only to the leader himself. This dramatic reshuffling of the politburo, buttressed by the duumvirate is a clear foil to coerce and commit young Kim to further dynastic rule. Lamentably, this may limit his ability to pursue a mandate of modernisation if desired, removing the shackles binding North Korea to oppressive communism since its founding sixty years ago.

China, a solitary ally and crucial provider of food and fuel aid to the nuclear-armed state has a vested interest in such smooth succession of power on Jong-Il's death. If tensions within the status quo do reach a brutal peak the state could fall apart, resulting in a protracted refugee crisis that could impose severe strains on China and neighbours Japan and South Korea. Though the prospect of the destitute country ravaged by famine being split by warring factions is improbable, it could fall into opportunistic imperialist hands such as the USA. This to China would be anathema, posing a threat to its worldwide hegemony in its own backyard.



Questions emerge over Browne review's efficacy

Tom White

It's inevitable: a rise in tuition fees, however it's packaged, will only be met with hostility by students. Therefore it is important to analyse any such proposals for what they truly are, even if only to justify that foregone reaction.

The findings of the Browne review, commissioned by the previous government, have recommended the removal of the cap on tuition fees which currently stands at £3,290 per year. The aim is primarily threefold:

to secure university funding for the future but also to create a situation in which university courses are directly competitive and to allow universities greater control over their finances.

The last two points are of greatest interest, permitting universities to set course fees in order to make courses more attractive or to capitalise on their most popular courses. This is basic supply and demand. But any economist will tell you that the immediate assumption this approach makes is that demand is elastic, that it will respond to changes in the price of the good.

In fact, I would argue that the op-

posite is true and that demand for university courses is inelastic. Lord Browne himself said in a press release: 'There is a lot of evidence that students don't just look at debt, but at the prize at the end.' This immediately undermines any notion that potential students will respond to changes in the price of a course, especially as, since students never see their tuition fees, there is no awareness of money changing hands (out of sight, out of mind).

The result of this is that universities can effectively charge what they like. And this is a market where the suppliers set the price. The threat

here is that universities could collude and effectively create a price cartel on fees. But in an increasingly market-like education system one would hope the Competition Commission would be able to intervene to stop this. The NUS and universities' individual unions are effective when it comes to negotiating over pastoral issues but when it comes to fees there is a sense that they have cried wolf one too many times and there are larger forces at play.

For a start, universities are still expected to meet certain standards of research. And there is always the danger that they will prioritise this

research agenda over the teaching of their current students. Because of the financial demands of competing in a research arms-race, it is in no way guaranteed that increased fees will translate into a tangible improvement in the quality of education for students.

Therefore, I fear that given more autonomy and without intervention universities will have no checks to stop them exploiting their fee-paying students. Rather than creating more equality of opportunity for education, such changes will only yield negative results for those paying the bill.

Arts & Reviews



Books: Pop science? Stephen Hawking's latest book fails to convince Jamie Mackay PAGE 21



Film: Imagine there's no Lennon... Exploring the life of a Beatles legend PAGE 19



Lady Gaga, sweaty teens and a few games

Delving into the world of gaming exhibitions, **Will Brierley** attends the Eurogamer Expo to preview next year's hits

There are plenty of high quality UK-based games developers: Codemasters, the developers behind world renowned titles such as *Dirt 2* and *Grid*, have their head offices just 5 miles away from good old Leamington Spa, and Bizarre Creations, the developers of the extremely successful *Project Gotham Racing* franchise, are based in Liverpool. Unfortunately, in my mind and the minds of many others, the United States of America is the home of the modern video game and when it comes to gaming expos, bigger is always better, something that America can do exceptionally well.

We're catching up though. This year's Eurogamer Expo was considerably larger and welcomed far more people than the previous year, allowing a vast number of what appeared to be mostly teenagers to sample the delights that the

world of gaming will be offering them over the next six months. What is truly exceptional is that this was only the second Eurogamer Expo; the first did so well that the venue had to be moved from a location on the Thames to Earl's Court, albeit not the main exhibition hall. And to put the icing on the Mario-shaped cake, even this year's event was completely sold out by the time the doors finally opened. It's clear that a lot of people in the UK were craving for an event that allowed them to demo titles that won't be released for several months, or simply anything that gave them a slice of the experiences on offer at the gargantuan PAX or E3 American events that so prominently sum up the gamers' ultimate fantasy.

The event was spectacular with an impressive range of titles, many of which won't be released until the end of the first quarter next year. New motion control hardware was also on

show, such as Sony's *Playstation Move*, allowing people to try it out before putting down their hard-earned cash, and Microsoft's *Kinect*, the far more interesting and yet to be released full body controller. Watching people who were never meant to dance jig along to Lady Gaga, in *Kinect's Dance Central*, does seem a little tasteless but it was also thoroughly entertaining, mainly because I wasn't the one doing the dancing.

Unfortunately it's the people that completely ruin this sort of event or possibly it's just my age... The show was filled with sweaty, obnoxious teenagers who couldn't help themselves from mouthing off all their general gaming knowledge and unbelievable (and so TOTALY AWESOME!!!) gaming achievements. I wanted to punch so many of them in the face. Due to the size of the expo, it took 15 to 20 minutes of hovering over said teenagers' shoulders

before playing on each game, resulting in what can only be described as a complete nightmare.

Granted, having a go on these pre-release builds is enjoyable but due to the limited amount of time you get with each game, you simply come away feeling robbed. Maybe if I were younger or accompanied by a group of likeminded friends I would find the entire spectacle far more entertaining but as it is, I recommend reading previews (such as those on the following double page spread) and just waiting for these games to turn up in the shops. They aren't meant to be played with a crowd of underage delinquents eagerly waiting for you to leave but in the comfort of your own home; alone and sealed in a dark room filled with energy drinks and chocolate. That's what gaming is all about.

Reviews overleaf

Bulletstorm



Bulletstorm
People Can Fly
Release Date: 22/02/2011
Xbox 360, PS3 and PC

Of all the games previewed here, *Bulletstorm* is the one you're least likely to have heard of. Although not a sequel, it does have some pedigree behind it; Epic Games, the studio behind the extremely successful *Gears of War* franchise, own a majority stake in *Bulletstorm's* developers, People Can Fly. So obviously *Bulletstorm* runs on the Unreal engine, giving it that distinct *Gears of War* or *Unreal Tournament* look but, while *Gears* uses about two colours throughout the entirety of the franchise, *Bulletstorm* was saturated with vivid and varied shades of red, green and blue. It simply looked fantastic and run exceptionally well, with an impressive framerate already. This is a major achievement for a game that won't be out for another five months and therefore still has plenty of time to get even prettier.

It wasn't the visuals that made this my game

ing them with the rifle's charged-up secondary fire. This was all extremely satisfying and just straight up fun.

Through playing well and racking up points from creative kills you'll be able to upgrade many of the range of weapons on offer. For example, the super powerful secondary fires for the rifle and close range shotgun both had to be unlocked before they could be used. This sort of progression is always welcome, adding another reason to presumably play through *Bulletstorm* again.

The level on show contained a lot of other worldly flora which could also be used to the players advantage; leashing enemies in, it was then possible to kick them into the giant cacti or many other environmental obstacles dotted around the level. There were also a number of movement mechanics, such as a slide, that felt very reminiscent of *Gears of War* and added a fluidity to the movement that so many first person shooters lack. The demo ended with a tease of a massive, plant-like boss. Unfortunately the game faded to black before the combat started but it did offer a glimpse of the scale that *Bulletstorm* will offer; it short, this looks to be massive.

Beheading enemies, turning them into nothing but bones and generally causing graphic destruction left, right and centre.

of the show though, it was the combat. By combining a number of unique gameplay mechanics and implementing a "Skillshots" system, People Can Fly have created what looks to be one of the most fun and entertaining first person shooters to be released in a long, long time.

The game, although story driven, is based around killing people in creative and interesting ways, resulting in points that rack up over the course of the level. This is accomplished by use of what can only be described as an energy leash, a button to do a high kick, and some powerful and dynamic secondary fires for the all of weapons. This might sound confusing, and it was at first, but after a while playing I soon got the hang of it; in no time I was using the leash to pull my enemies close to me, which then causes them alone to float through the air in slow-mo, kicking them away from me again and obliterat-

This game is definitely not for the squeamish. Within seconds I was beheading enemies, turning them into nothing but bones and generally causing graphic destruction left, right and centre. The art style, with it's vivid colour palette, doesn't make the game's gory nature too overpowering, instead giving it more of a detached comic book feel, similar to the Spartan romp 300.

Bulletstorm should be a bloody awesome game come February next year. Offering so much unadulterated, pure entertainment in a demo five months before released, it's hard to see how the full game could be anything other than incredible. If the story's there to back up the gameplay and the levels are varied enough for the combat to not stagnate, *Bulletstorm* will no doubt be one of the best games of next year. Definitely keep this one on your radar.

Gran Turismo 5



Gran Turismo 5
Polyphony Digital Inc.
Release Date: TBA
PS3

Is it just me or does anyone else think that the previous *Gran Turismo* games were horrendously boring? I love driving games and have always played through the *GT* titles, mainly for the progression and the incredibly detailed and varied collection of cars, but the races are just so tedious.

The AI has always been slated for solidly sticking to the driving line with absolutely no aggression. This resulted in just bashing into cars to get round corners quicker, knowing that there would be absolutely no repercussions. For a game that calls itself "the real driving simulator" that's pretty pathetic. When compared to how much Codemasters and the *Forza* franchise have pushed the driving genre forward, *Gran Turismo* looks pretty old school these

days. Needless to say, I wasn't super pumped for playing the fifth instalment but, as there was a short queue, I gave it a go.

I was surprised. A lot of *GT5* was exactly what I thought it would be, mostly *GT4* in HD, but a number of improvements have been made. Firstly, and one of the most obvious additions, was the new cockpit views. Not only are these exquisitely modelled, as expected, but they also add some excitement to *GT's* driving experience, something that it desperately needed. It still wasn't up there with *Grid*, at no point did the game get my adrenaline pumping, but it was still a considerable improvement. There was also an off-road/WRC section on offer which, although not the franchise's first departure into offroad racing, has definitely mixed up what you can expect from *GT5*.

GT5 will no doubt be an excellent game as long as it can keep the gameplay exciting. The real question is if this game will ever actually be released; announced in 2006, *GT5* has been years in the making and when everyone finally thought it would be released this November, it has been pushed back again. Maybe one day...



>> With the Eurogamer Expo selling out two years in a row, it's becoming the definitive

Fallout: New Vegas



Fallout: New Vegas
Obsidian Entertainment
Release Date: 22/10/10
Xbox 360, PS3 and PC

My playthrough of *New Vegas* started in an isolated area of the game's locale, an excessively large map of a devastated Vegas, and while it was great to be playing some more *Fallout*, it was immediately clear that this game will be more *Fallout 3.5* than a fully fleshed out sequel. The game plays nearly identically to its predecessor, with no major changes being apparent in the short time that I had with the game. The art style is practically the same, there's still a Pitboy on the character's arm, another Vault styled jumpsuit made an appearance and there was a considerable amount of wandering around.

This isn't necessarily a bad thing, *Fallout 3* was a fantastic title due to the scale and detail

that had been applied to the post-apocalyptic world the characters inhabited, but it wasn't without issue. Most concerning is that *New Vegas's* conservation system and animations seem to be unchanged; characters still stand directly in front of you while conversing, with absolutely no body animation, and when in third-person mode the game looks thoroughly unconvincing. This was a major problem in the original *Fallout 3*, stopping anyone from getting truly immersed in the experience. If points like this haven't been addressed in the final build of *New Vegas* (which is very likely as it comes out this week), it may not offer enough over the original *Fallout 3* to warrant a purchase.

To be fair though, *New Vegas* is the sort of game that requires a commitment; like anything worthwhile in life, you'll no doubt have to put a lot of time in before getting the maximum enjoyment out. This makes a 15 minute show-floor demo very hard to accurately represent what the experience of the final game has to offer, especially so when the majority of that time was spent wandering through a wasteland. Saying that, there were some notable addi-



gaming exhibition photo: Will Brierley

Killzone 3



Killzone 3
Guerrilla Games
Release Date: TBA
PS3

3D is what movie execs and TV manufacturers the world over are hoping to be the next big thing but I really can't see it catching on anytime soon. If you've been travelling round the Congo for the last year or so, you might have missed the "entertainment event of the decade" or *Avatar* to everyone else who doesn't work for James Cameron. This film really solidified 3Ds presence in the cinema, resulting in all future movie blockbusters implementing 3D in some way or another (such as the upcoming *Tron Legacy*).

Avatar also caused all the major TV manufacturers, such as Sony and Samsung, to think that everyone who watched *Avatar* in the cinemas would love to replicate the experience in their own homes. There's a distinct difference between donning some sexy polarising glasses in the cinema as a special treat and having to wear glasses all the time at home, simply to enjoy the newest releases. Who really wants to wear glasses, which are active shutter and therefore expensive, at home? I definitely don't.

Sony Computer Entertainment have also jumped on the bandwagon, presumably under pressure from their Television division brothers (who actually want some content for their £1000+ televisions), and have updated the PS3 to support 3D games. One such title is *Killzone 3* which continues the story of the previous two

A well built title that will surely dominate the charts once it's released

games; mankind's desperate fight against the Helghast oppressors. The gameplay felt very similar to the second instalment of the franchise, when playing what was on offer at the Eurogamer Expo; basic cover mechanics are still present, the weapons appeared to be the same and level progression is still built around impressive set piece after impressive set piece. The combat still had it's distinct *Killzone* feel, which is either a good or bad thing depending on preference, and it very much felt like a well built title that will surely dominate the charts once it's released.

What was worrying however, was how much emphasis the developers are putting on the 3D aspect of the game's presentation. The effect was definitely apparent, the visuals had the depth you'd expect from a blockbuster movie and the HUD floated above the combat. Unfortunately the fidelity of what was happening onscreen seemed like it had been significantly toned down from that in *Killzone 2*; it looked like it was running at a lower resolution with jagged edges all over the place and low-res textures making the overall experience very murky.

The PS3 is a powerful machine but if it can't handle 1080p 3D yet then I'm really not interested. *Killzone 2* looked absolutely fantastic and if this is going to be compromised by adding an effect that usually gives me eye strain, has an extremely high barrier to entry (who really wants to buy a 3DTV after just getting a HDTV?) and still occasionally results in double images then we've definitely got a problem Sony. The *Killzone* franchise isn't exactly innovative, relying instead on it's extremely good presentation to deliver the thrills; if this has been messed up by 3D then what has *Killzone 3* really got going for it?

tions; a number of new weapons were available to play with, as well as components that could be used for customisation. The developers say that there are over double the amount of weapons found in *Fallout 3* but this isn't a numbers game, it's all down to how many of these are enjoyable to use. Fortunately, out of the few I got my hands on, this definitely seems the case. Having a rapid-fire grenade launcher is always going to be entertaining and here, such a powerful weapon made the usually dull combat invigorating. However, the combat does still incorporate VATS, allowing the player to pause the gameplay and attack individual parts of their enemies. As before, this leads to the majority of the gameplay revolving around getting as close to your opponent as possible, engaging VATS and shooting them straight in the head.

It's clear that *New Vegas*, as with *Fallout 3*, is still not a combat focused game and it's success will depend solely on how well the game world has been crafted and realised, and definitely not the mediocre combat or terrible animation which seem to have, unfortunately, carried over from the previous instalment.

FIFA 11



FIFA 11
EA Canada
Xbox 360, PS3 and PC

★★★★★

Like the approaching winter, the student overdraft and the rise in tuition fees, there's no escaping *FIFA*. The footballing juggernaut, which has confidently overshadowed *Pro Evolution Soccer* for the past couple of years is back - but is it worth shelling out another £40 for?

The short answer? If you have *FIFA 10*, no. *FIFA 11* doesn't have enough improvements to merit your cash (and, particularly if you are a student, there probably isn't much of that about).

If you have any older versions of *FIFA* however, then the answer is a definite yes. You won't feel that it's *FIFA 10.2*, or that the 'Be A Pro: Goalkeeper' mode is a complete and utter waste of a poor game designer's year. But on to that later.

One of the most important things to say about this game, however much I criticise it, is that *FIFA 11* is the best football game ever. The 360-degree dribbling, introduced in last year's edition, with a better passing system and the new 'Personality Plus' mechanic brings the game alive. Whether you are new to the series, or a veteran who can thump most of the online community 5-0, there will be many times during the game when you will think 'Wow'. 'Personality Plus' gives players attributes that are like their real life counterparts, so Drogba fights his way through every defender known to man whilst Ronaldo seems quicker on the ball than Usain Bolt in the 100m.

Virtual Pro is as addictive as ever, allowing you to place yourself in the game and become the worlds' greatest footballer. You can even download your face into the game. Whilst it's impressive that you can play alongside Rooney, the fine-tuning of his face against the computer generated 3D effect of yours doesn't really stack up. Unless you get the skin tone exact in the online creation portal and the game, it just looks like a mask. Even Ronaldinho comes across as better looking in comparison.

So what is it about this game that frustrates me? It plays like a dream, has amazing graphics,

awesome commentary and is polished to the highest degree. I think my problem with *FIFA 11* is not confined to the game, but EA Sports themselves. On every single menu are bright red letters spelling out 'NEW', constantly reminding you of the minute changes that have been brought in since *FIFA 10*. 'Career Mode' is described as one of these 'NEW' features but in reality it's Be A Pro, Manager and Player-Manager modes combined into one, ridiculously long and uninspiring career. It just can't compete with *Pro Evolution Soccer's* 'Master League' and as a result feels disappointing for something EA considers as 'new'.

The new 'Be A Pro: Goalkeeper' mode is fun for a few minutes but after that a massive bore. It seems that EA Sports have recognised this, adding the option to watch the other players on the field with the Back button and shout commands at them. Which is as much fun as it sounds. The lack of football you experience as a goalkeeper makes the experience a giant waste of time. Yes, it allows the option of true 11v11 online matches, but I can't imagine that anyone would seriously want to be the keeper (unless they want to try and score a goal with Cech and lose the game for everyone else).

On top of that, EA Sports are now trying to wipe out the second hand gaming market with the inclusion of an 'Online Pass', which allows you to access 'all online matchmaking features' and take part in 11v11 games over Xbox Live. What makes this 'Pass' ridiculous is that once the code is entered, any new owner of the same disc has to buy a pass from EA Sports, effectively creating a strangle-hold on gamers wishing to buy the game second hand. I could understand if it were a game that came out every few years, but for a series that is refreshed every 12 months, it seems a bit extreme to target gamers who might not be able to afford the game's full price.

In reality, EA Sports could release *FIFA 11* as a patch for *FIFA 10* owners, charge half the price, and still make an absolute tonne of money. However, I doubt EA, having earned \$150 million in the first week of sales, will be thinking of turning *FIFA* into an expansion pack.

To conclude, if you buy a *FIFA* game every few years, this update is well worth your money. If you own *FIFA 10* however, please, please save your money until *FIFA 13* at the earliest

Michael Rennett

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Rolling out the red carpet

Ludo Hashemi speaks with headliners of the Welcome Party, Jon McLure’s new band *Reverend Soundsystem*

What do you do in your first few days as a Fresher? Drink too much? Meet lots of people? Maybe go along to a gig or two and have a good time? So what actually makes the infamous Freshers’ week so good? The SU did their bit, throwing a welcome party with Reverend Soundsystem as the main attraction.

Reverend Soundsystem is a side project of Reverend and The Makers, made up of Jon ‘The Reverend’ McClure (vocals), Matic Mouth

Laura: Man! You guys are WAY better, WAY better! And actually I am being honest; Warwick students were SO up for it last night! It was really good to see people just letting go and having a good time and forgetting about rules.

Jimmy: Coventry really wasn’t one of the good ones!

So in terms of campuses – you’ve done a whole Freshers’ tour – what would you say was the best campus? What would you say was the worst?

This lot just go bonkers – universities are crazy at the minute! They’ve all been alright apart from Coventry – that was a bit slow

(vocals, MC), Laura McClure (keyboards) and Jimmy Welsh (electronics, turntables). They’re pioneering a new mix of indie and dubstep.

We at the *Boar* caught up with RSS backstage to get their take on the big event of Freshers weekend...

So you played the union – how did it go?

Laura: Awesome, fucking awesome man! Everyone was bang up for it. It was really refreshing to see Freshers who were up for it and ready to have a good time at university.

MM: I got a bit of crowd-surfing in, bit of water throwing, beer-spilling. It was a bit weird seeing 100 people in the same T-shirt... but it was cool, I loved it!

Jimmy: Yeah really loud as well –one of the loudest PA’s I think we’ve played on.

You guys played Coventry Uni – who are technically our varsity rivals – how do we compare to them?

MM: Because two of us are from Sheffield – it’s our home town – it was different - kind of sentimental, a bit more romantic. Whereas this lot just go BONKERS – universities are crazy at the minute! The worst one... they’ve all been alright apart from Coventry – Coventry was a bit slow.

The music industry today is very short-term – bands come and go and no-one seems to remember. Do you find it frustrating?

Laura: I think the whole world is like that – it’s not just music. We live in a very short term world with not many long-term solutions... I think every industry is like that at the moment. You used to have a job for life and that just doesn’t really exist anymore.

Jimmy: We’re in a situation in the UK where DJs like Zane Lowe would sell-out a club quicker than Example would sell-out a club. More people are interested in seeing someone like Chris Moyles than they are in seeing Coldplay, and so I think that’s a bit of an issue.



>> Former Reverend and The Makers frontman Jon McLure photo: Charley Murgatroyd

On your MySpace page your music is described as Indie-Dubstep or Indie-step – is that just sort of a combination of things you all love? Or do you think you’ve invented a new genre?

MM: We believe we’ve created a new sound. Basically, we’re making songs on a dubstep tempo really, stripping away and just replacing it with a nice melody and a nice chorus and things like that. You could say we’ve created a genre, but it needs more people to back it up.

Jimmy: It’s just party music basically. We’ve got a keyboard, turntables and a laptop. We’re pretty

flexible.

Have you got any advice about how to make the most of your first year?

Laura: Go to as many parties as possible. Go out, don’t stay in. Don’t love those pyjamas, they may seem sexy and comfy but they’re not! They’re shit! Get out there, have a good time, laugh your tits off for three years and then get serious.

MM: Meet people; learn how other people do things. Don’t be so separate from everything – get connected.

Albums

Invented
Jimmy Eat World

★★★★☆



If you judge Jimmy Eat World’s new album ‘Invented’ on the first single, ‘My Best Theory’, you might assume that they were another image- obsessed, skinny-jean wearing, pop-electronica-rock band. On closer listen ‘Invented’ reveals why Jimmy Eat World, are able to produce music that satisfies an enduring, old-school fan base. A valiant vocal display from frontman Jim Adkins is aided by a range of romantic acoustic numbers and fast-paced, hard-hitting rock songs. One of the few defenders of true alternative rock, on ‘Invented’ Jimmy Eat World show they still have what it takes. **Ramsey Marwan**

Grinderman 2
Grinderman

★★★★☆



In 2006, Nick Cave, of Bad Seeds fame, started a band called Grinderman with, er, the Bad Seeds. Who sounded a lot like Nick Cave’s other ‘other’ band, The Birthday Party. Incestuous beginnings aside, ‘debut’ album ‘Grinderman’ was a raucous exciting slice of grimy bluesy rock. Much fun was had by all. ‘Grinderman 2’ unsurprisingly continues where the previous album left off. The lyrics manage to be darker but the music lacks some of the thrill. ‘Palaces of Montezuma’ could even be called, gulp, radio-friendly. Not a disappointment, but not what fans might have hoped for. **Emma Millward**

Man Alive
Everything Everything

★★★★☆



On their much anticipated debut album ‘Man Alive’, Everything Everything have created an imaginative if frustratingly inconsistent album. Full of melodic harmonies set against a background of laptop created instrumentation, Everything Everything sound like an exciting blend of, Montreal, Friendly Fires and Wild Beasts. Everything Everything produce songs that at times lend themselves to the dance floor, whilst at other times, in songs like ‘Tin (The Manhole),’ oddly sound more like a musical soundscape of a blissed-out lake somewhere in the far northern hemisphere. **Jacqueline Bowerman**

Halcyon Digest
Deerhunter

★★★★★



‘Halcyon Digest’ in many ways picks up where its 2008 predecessor ‘Microcastle’ left off. The band continues its move towards a more focussed sound. The album’s pop anthem ‘Memory Boy’, showcases Deerhunter’s new found fondness of more traditional song structures. It’s beautifully built around the line “it’s not a house anymore”, joyfully alternating between three distinct, yet interlocking parts in a Beatles-esque manner. Whilst ‘Coronado’, with colourful Saxophone runs and moving lyrics, demonstrates that ‘Halcyon Digest’ is a magnificent album and merits repeated listens. **Felix Buckwald**

Warwick: capital of clunge, 2010

Feisty one **Hollie Mantle** is lost in the *Inbetweeners*' portrayal of Warwick life

A hoy fellow Comrades, Admirals and... no wait a second, let's get back to reality. Hello non-greasy, non-obese, non-twattish fellow students. Let's talk *Inbetweeners*.

I'm sure there are those of you who desperately peeked through your next door neighbour's windows to catch *The Inbetweeners* on E4 every Monday (preferably one who hasn't got kids so you don't look like a raging paedophile), and then watched it again several times on t'internet to get your fix. It's understandable. Three weeks ago, I was one of you. That was before they decided to visit Warwick. In one fell swoop the legendary half an hour episodes which used to brighten up our non-eventful Monday nights (unless you're still convinced that Manic Mondays can beat the magic of Top B...) went from hero to zero.

The impression that it managed to establish of Warwick University in a mere half an hour is probably going to make my friends at home equate me with some sort of pseudo-military imbecile. I can't wait for them to scream "QUESTIONS?!" at me whilst pelting me with cans of Stella and demanding that I eat Bonsai Trees. It won't take me long to snap, throw the Bonsai tree at them and end up in prison for GBH. Thanks E4; this is what you've reduced my life to. If it weren't for the repeats of *Friends* that you continue to show I'd probably give up on you entirely.

Obviously there is some stick to be taken for going to Warwick. You know the sort of thing; everyone masturbates over *University Challenge*, some people are more friendly with the ducks on campus than they are with their actual hallmates and everyone on campus is paranoid about filling in those fun party forms. To be honest though, I'd much prefer that stick to the misinformed presentation that Jay and the rest of the deceptively pre-pubescent looking gang gave us (Simon Bird's 26!), which was a painful far cry from the truth. Tara's sister looked like Phil Mitchell's long lost twin, sounded like a sexless version of Vin Diesel and had the sense of humour of a menstrual bumble bee. She was also far too old. She seemed like she would fit in better at the local WI than as a full time student at Warwick. Me and my friends still get ID'd in pubs, struggle to grow beards and get asked what GCSEs we're planning on taking in the future. I think she's an imposter. If she's actually at Warwick, I'm scared. She's rough. She can take me. I don't want her to be after my blood.

Her house was a pretty shoddy model of a student hovel. Aside from the fact that it was misguidedly placed in Warwick town, feigning to admit the shocking truth that our university is, in fact, in Coventry and not an antiquated little town with more scones than sense, *The Inbetweeners* failed to fully represent how crap the conditions of our houses really are. Where, I ask you, were the empty Dominoes boxes that the housemates were too lazy to move from their crusty bedroom floors? Where was the pile of unread Midweek Couriers, unpaid bills and threatening letters from the TV licensing company? Not one of the gang made any protestation at being greeted by the rotten smell of something that resembles an unholy mix of



vomit and stale cat food, as is standard in student accommodation. Instead, I imagine they were struck by the smell of lavender incense, vanilla candles and the latest installation in the Harpic Room Aroma range as they walked around the well decorated lounge, spacious bedrooms and fully kitted out kitchen.

...so you don't look like a raging paedophile...

Admittedly, there were some truths hidden within the depths of misconception. At Pop we sing/yell chants in the faces of our friends and we may adopt vaguely racist, moronic drinking games similar to those seen in *The Inbetweeners*. If you're rich, your house might actually be fitted with furniture that wasn't found discarded on top of Leamington Furnishers' pile of sofas that even the homeless and the paralytically drunk would refuse to sleep on. But, lets face it, it's unlikely. The 'Warwick students' in *The*

Inbetweeners look like they're more likely to be in the audience of *Jeremy Kyle* than in a lecture on astrophysics. They appear to be homeless nomads who wander the streets of Warwick town at night hunting for all five students who actually live there, playing their moronic and senseless drinking games along the way.

However, up to the debacle that was the Warwick episode, it was a great series and a splendid show. Let's face it, even though *The Inbetweeners* misrepresented us, it was still a good laugh and it was a far more entertaining romp than what's going to fill its place in the coming weeks. Unless some freshers want to recreate the moment when Simon got wanked off in the middle of a holiday camp dancefloor at Manic Mondays, or some finalist decides it would be a good idea to shit in the middle of his exam, it's unlikely that the mild thrill of a Warwick reality will be quite as compelling as a half hour frolic with *The Inbetweeners*.

It's just a shame that the pretentious little Cambridge graduates tried so desperately to sully our reputation and, in doing so, my enjoyment of the show. Clunge move, boys.

Toby Steinberg gets down to business with Lord Sugar

Another year, another remarkably serendipitous job opening at Amstrad. Rather strange how essentially the same position with the same salary keeps appearing at the same time at a supposedly valid company. Luckily, this means that *The Apprentice* (or alternatively *Lord Sugar's Theatre of Pain*) has returned for yet another dose of malignant-narcissism-in-poorly-fitted-suits. Surely it would be utterly remiss for us not to critique this most beloved of televised melees? Actually, it wouldn't, as irritatingly for the lazy TV columnist, the BBC effectively review their own programme through a matey epilogue with a curiously scornful title, *The Apprentice - You're Fired*, which hoovers up all the best observations before the average journalist has even noted down, "Contestants seem unpleasant". Well fuck it, there's going to be a review anyway and, what's more, we'll review their review as well, purely out of spite.

As Lord Sugar sagely notes over the opening credits, these are tough economic times (thereby displaying the piercing analysis that ensured his shiny new peerage). Clearly, then, in this climate of straitened prudence, it's the perfect time to launch an extravagant, televised 10 week job interview, gradually whittling down the mindlessly brash before a toss-up between the barely competent. In fact, barely competent may be too ambitious a remit this year, as, in these difficult economic times, a surprisingly large proportion of even the best and brightest business minds are actually unemployed including recent graduate, Raleigh, demonstrating that *The Apprentice* is a viable alternative to pulling pints at Wetherspoons.

The first task of the new series, a standard sales task featuring sausages (presumably selected out of a hat), was an odd combination of amateur butchery and sleep deprivation. This necessitated a distressing amount of footage depicting low grade meat being forced through a mincer, which strikes one as a fairly apt metaphor for the show itself. Defeated project leader, Dan, whose management style seemed to have been modelled on a bullish mob boss with a peptic ulcer, was the first to go, specifically for being too aggressive, which is akin to being removed from *America's Next Top Model* for being too bulimic.

However, arguably even more unlikable than the erstwhile Dan was his executioner, Stuart Baggs 'the brand', who at the tender age of 21 has achieved a level of sheer obnoxiousness normally associated with history's top dictators. Other apprentice of particular note include sociopathic pixie, Melissa, grindingly persistent moron, Joanna, and investment banker, Chris, who insisted on delivering a series of bizarre pitches consisting of banal yet minutely detailed vignettes acted out by other Chris (who looks like an Afghanistani soapstar). In any case, all managed to resist karmic justice this week, leaving near-silent ditherer Joy to face the finger, possibly because her every moment on screen was somehow inexpressibly (and ironically) depressing.

As for *The Apprentice - You're Fired*, things are much the same, save for the replacement of former BBC presenter and Morlock poster-boy Adrian Chiles with Dara O'Brien, a comedian who actively aspires to mediocrity. This renders the whole show a tad more watchable solely through the absence of Chiles' face, which always looked as though it had a fourth dimension that the camera was struggling to detect. Frankly, O'Brien's not much of an aesthetic improvement. He's not so much a tall man as a freakishly short giant, but at this rate the presenter should at least look vaguely human by 2020. Perhaps they could cast the role through some sort of televised competition...

Pick of the week

Luton Airport

Thursday 21st
Sky 3, 7pm

Apparently Luton has an airport. It's got its own show. Wow.

Eddie Stobart: Trucks and Trailers

Friday 22nd
Channel 5, 8pm

This show is PROPER LOL if you engage in autoerotica.

The Zone

Sunday 24th
ITV1, 12.30am

If you loved *The Mint*, you might mildly enjoy *The Zone*.

Discovering the Nowhere Boy

Lydia Shellien-Walker finds out about events that spawned The Beatles' frontman

Having just celebrated what would have been the seventieth birthday of international music legend John Lennon with the unveiling of a sculptural tribute in his home town of Liverpool, this issue's biopic looks back on the life of a man so often in the public eye. A man whose life was surrounded by controversy, lived in adoration, and ended in tragedy. *Nowhere Boy*, based on the story of Lennon's youth, portrays an often overlooked side to the global icon.

We all know John Lennon the Beatle, alongside Paul, George and Ringo, for writing the likes of *Strawberry Fields Forever* and *I am the Walrus*. We all know John Lennon, the Vietnam War activist, imagining a 'brotherhood of man', and his campaign for peace. We all know John and Yoko and their week-long Bed-In. But how many of us know about Lennon's traumatic youth, where the inspiration for his later tribute on John Lennon/ Plastic Ono band, 'Mother' came from, and what happened in his past to form the man that would become the 'serious' Beatle, and eventually achieve international fame beyond the calibre of a pop star?

Whilst a member of The Beatles, Lennon was known for his outspoken, comical attitude - causing controversy when claiming his band was 'bigger than Jesus', and consequently having many records banned and burned in the US. After the break-up of the Beatles in 1970, Lennon continued to be known for his social activism, particularly his 'larger than life' 'messianic' approach to his anti-war campaigning during the Vietnam War; which almost got him deported from the States during the Nixon administration. Existing simultaneously as a controversial and inspirational figure, one to whom many listened, and many tried to silence; John Lennon remains a landmark in the history of both music and politics.

Nowhere Boy is the story of the early years that would form John Lennon. Being brought up in stifling suburban Liverpool with his less than sympathetic Aunt Mimi, and adoring Uncle George, with just casual acquaintance with his mother, and none whatsoever with his father, the film explores John's early relationships and the tragic events that would go on to shape him.

John Lennon was born to John and Julia Lennon in Liverpool, 1940. His father, a member of the merchant navy, was often absent, and during one such period his mother became pregnant by another man, leading to the break-up of the family; subsequently causing him to be brought up by his Aunt and Uncle from the age of five, not to see his father again until making it big with The Beatles.

Through vivid cinematography and a bold

style celebrating the era of 50's Rock 'n' Roll, *Nowhere Boy* vibrantly illuminates young Lennon's world. The stark contrast between the conservative home of Aunt Mimi and that of his mother's house - one brought alive by music, becomes the setting for Sam Taylor-Woods' first feature length film.

After the devastating death of his Uncle George, John is introduced to the sexy world of Elvis and Rock 'n' Roll by his mother, and with it we witness the evolution and sexualisation of his character - from grammar school boy to rebellious Teddy Boy. In this world, John learns to play guitar, and eventually meets Paul and George, later to become key figures in his life. The film depicts John's life up until the tragic death of his mother in a road accident and soon after when the will-be Beatles leave for Hamburg on their first ever international tour. With the screenplay by Matt Greenhalgh, who also wrote *Control*; *Nowhere Boy* maintains some of the grit of a good British drama, delving deep into relationships, and unlike *In His Life: The John Lennon Story* (2000), does not just skim over a vast range of events in Lennon's life. *Nowhere Boy* focuses on a specified time and place, and moves far more slowly and sentimentally than the earlier biopic. Rather than merely treating him as an inconceivably famous icon, *Nowhere Boy* humanises John Lennon, and provides an insight into why he would later go through 'primal scream' therapy, and use his past to make his music.

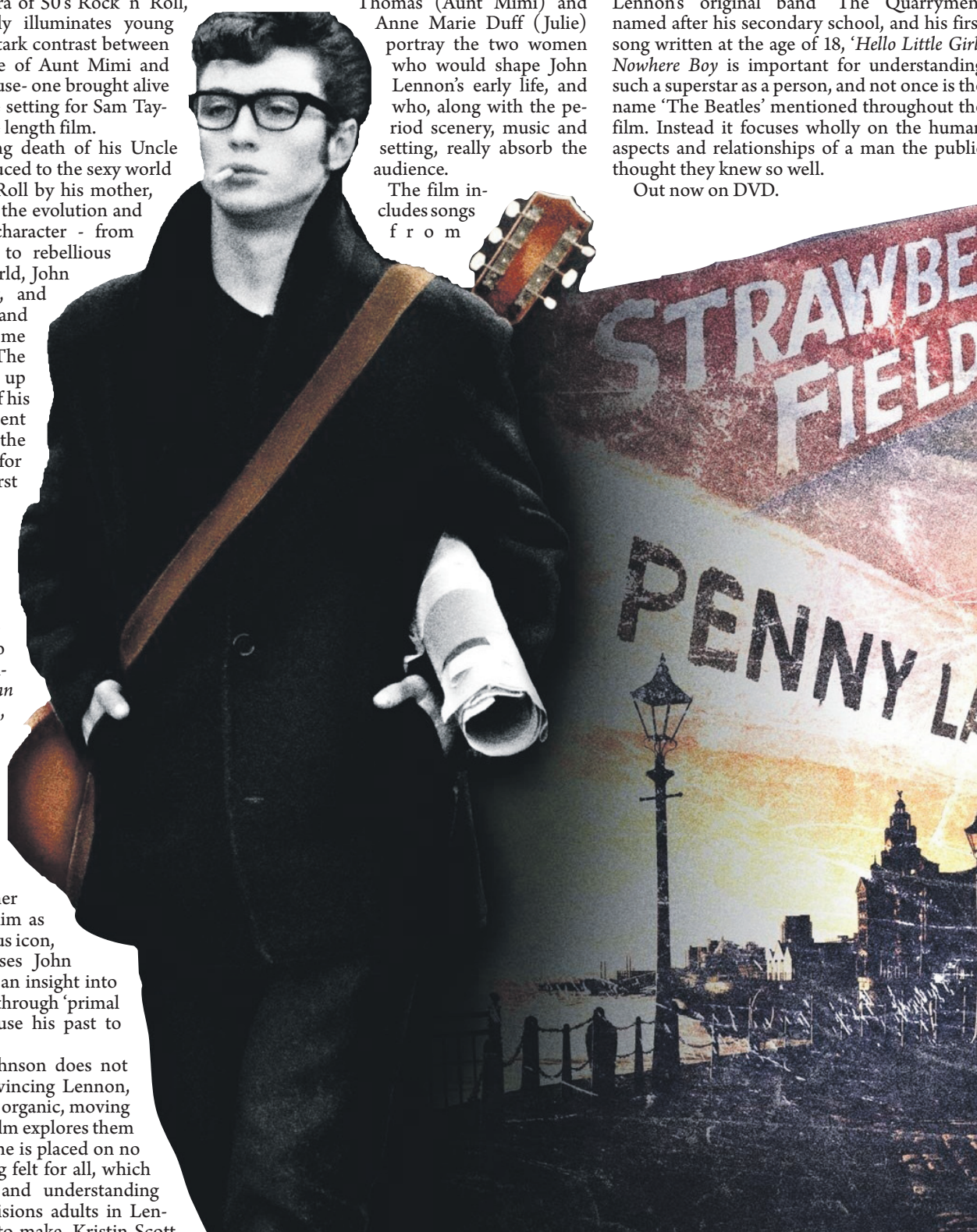
Although Aaron Johnson does not provide the most convincing Lennon, the characters do form organic, moving relationships and the film explores them in such a way that blame is placed on no one, but understanding felt for all, which creates a poignancy and understanding of the impossible decisions adults in Lennon's life were forced to make. Kristin Scott

Thomas (Aunt Mimi) and Anne Marie Duff (Julie) portray the two women who would shape John Lennon's early life, and who, along with the period scenery, music and setting, really absorb the audience.

The film includes songs from

Lennon's original band 'The Quarrymen', named after his secondary school, and his first song written at the age of 18, 'Hello Little Girl'. *Nowhere Boy* is important for understanding such a superstar as a person, and not once is the name 'The Beatles' mentioned throughout the film. Instead it focuses wholly on the human aspects and relationships of a man the public thought they knew so well.

Out now on DVD.



What's on at Warwick Student Cinema

With a membership fee of just £2.50, including your first film free and each one thereafter for only £2, the Warwick Student Cinema is not only superbly priced and conveniently located, but also has films to suit every taste. Now featuring 'Foreign Thursdays', screening exciting new foreign language films, and with the return of 'The All Nighter', keep an eye out for what's coming up each term.

The White Ribbon
Thursday 21st October

Set in a fictional village days before the start of World War I, where the villagers have been plagued by a series of mysterious incidents.



The Disappearance of Alice Creed
Tuesday 26th October

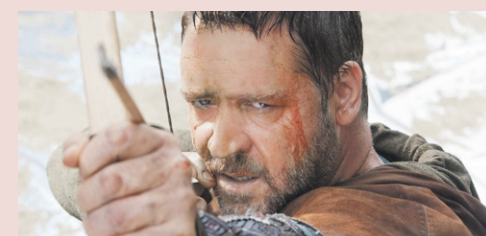
This low budget thriller that consists of only three characters and four locations has been described as an onscreen play, delving into the kidnapping of Alice Creed. Gripping.

Amélie
Thursday 28th October

Light hearted and mischievous, but also deeply moving and with beautiful cinematography, *Amélie* is an interesting tale set in captivating Paris. Should not be missed.

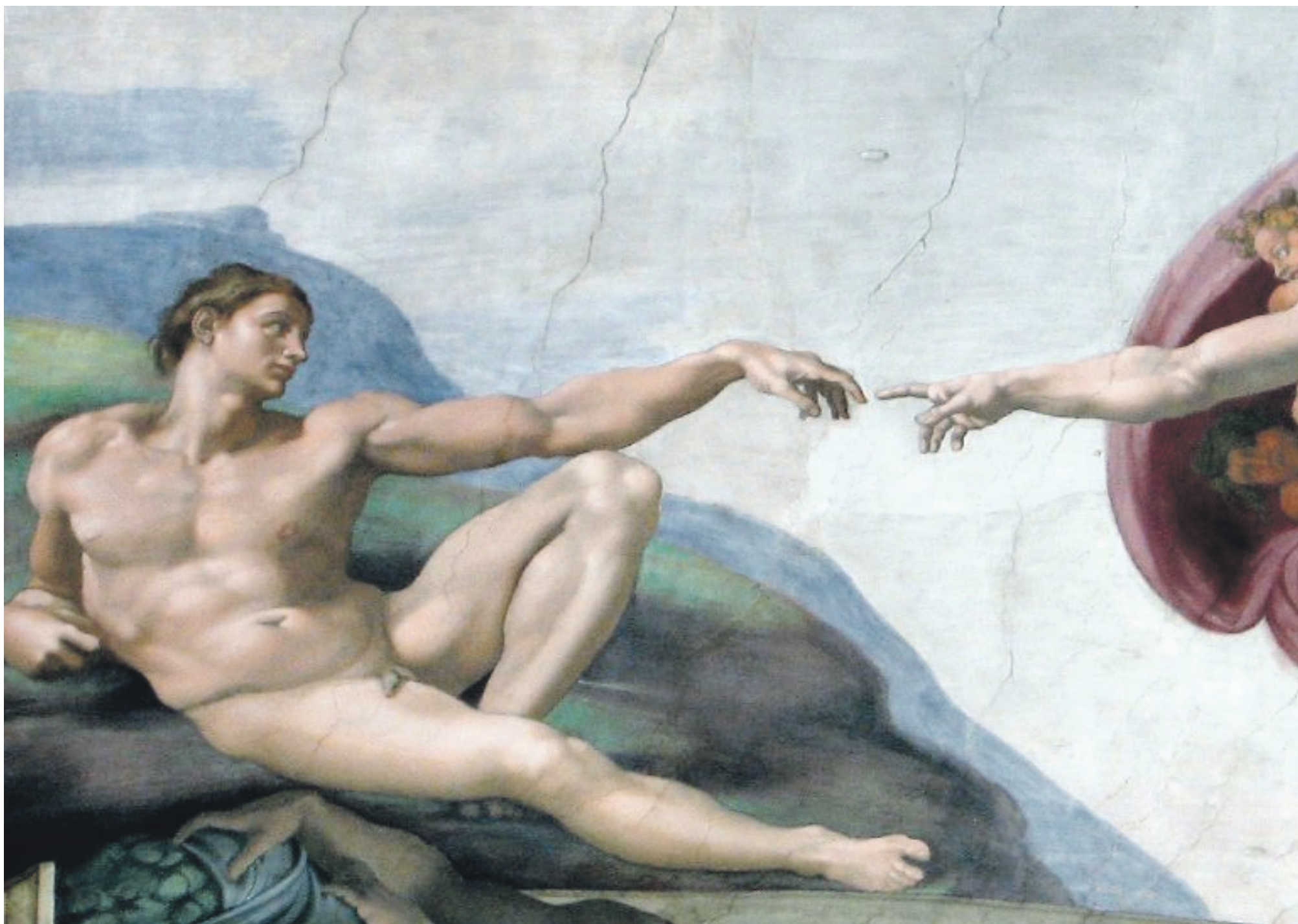
Hotel Rwanda
Wednesday 27th October

Hotel Rwanda is the true story of Paul Rusesbagina, manager of an upper class hotel during the Tutsi - Hutu civil war in Rwanda. This horrific story is extremely moving and highly illuminating. An enthralling and important film.



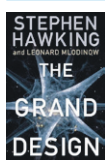
Robin Hood
Sunday 31st October

Russell Crowe stars in this action packed tale of Robin Hood before he came to be the rob-from-the-rich-and-give-to-the-poor rogue we know and love.



Hawking's fight against religion: a lost cause?

Jamie Mackay finds only disappointment in an ambitious work from the universally-known scientist Stephen Hawking



The Grand Design
Stephen Hawking
& Leonard Mlodinow

★★★★☆

Reading Stephen Hawking's latest book is a little like watching Christopher Nolan's *Inception*. The first time through it seems sophisticated and intelligent; it's exciting, daring and rewards those who pay close attention. When dwelled on and repeated, however, you quickly realise that it was disjointed and made absolutely no sense at all.

For *Inception* this was not such a problem, after all it was a science fiction film designed primarily to entertain and entertain it did. Hawking's book, however, has much loftier aspirations, namely to demonstrate that God is 'unnecessary'. It does this by appeal to M-theory, the hypothesis being that the universe simply created itself in the Big Bang and that there is no need to postulate a bearded intervener to light the torch.

The first problem then, is that the concept of the creator God who designed the world in seven days has been challenged before in many more eloquent ways. To suggest that the uni-

verse may have created itself is simply to define what some people, such as Pantheists, might call God and thus the issue becomes a semantic one, not alleviated by the lack of definition given in *The Grand Design*.

Hawking narrates the book with the condescending sneer of an arrogant thirteen-year-old explaining the mechanics of sexual intercourse to one of his juniors. Evidently so secure in his

comes in an infinite number of different variations and has the potential of creating an infinite number of universes. We simply cannot comprehend infinity and cannot apply scientific thinking to it. The amount of 'faith' required in adopting Hawking's viewpoint begs the question: why is this theory any better than the next one?

Here, Hawking commits the fundamental er-

what the significance of this is.

The strongest section of the book is its introduction which consists of a fascinating and informative review of historical conceptions of the universe from Ancient Greece, through to Copernicus and ending with an account of quantum theory and string theory. If this measured tone had continued throughout, the book would have been all the better for it.

But ultimately, *The Grand Design* is a pop science book. It is not an astronomical treatise and its conclusions should not be interpreted as if it were. The title of the book and the marketing of the material were designed to exploit the public's curiosity about religious questions. What guarantees a best-seller more than a few references to God? In reality it would have been a far better project if it had avoided such issues and instead provided a more in-depth analysis of M-theory. Hawking is, after all, a brilliant scientist. What he shows here, however, is what a dreadful philosopher he can be too. If you are one of those people who creamed themselves reading *The God Delusion* then this may well prove to be an interesting read for you. For anyone else, save yourself eighteen pounds and buy *Inception* on DVD instead- it has as much science in it as Hawking's book and many more explosions, which (take note Stephen) all have obvious causes.

Hawking narrates the book with the condescending sneer of an arrogant thirteen-year-old explaining the mechanics of sexual intercourse to one of his juniors

conclusions, he hastily skims over the fact that various other physicists, most notably John Horgan, have challenged the very notion of M-theory as 'highly improbable' and even described its underlying premise of the anthropic principle as 'cosmological creationism'. This seems somewhat ironic given Hawking's objective here.

The real problem with this book though is that its proposal is no more grounded in science than a belief in God may be. The M-theory

ror of misunderstanding the functions of both philosophy and science. He boldly claims in the opening pages that 'Philosophy is dead': that metaphysics has become physics. As far as I see it, however, philosophy can never die. Yes, problems that historically belonged to philosophy have been explained by science, but with such solutions having been found, brand new questions arise that are still well within the concerns of the philosopher. Science is the quest to explore how the world works; philosophy asks

Tags and treats

Maria Dimitrova looks at Singapore's enfant terrible of contemporary art Vincent Leow's latest exhibition

When it comes to alternative art in Singapore, Vincent Leow is the one name you need to remember. A pivotal figure in the Southeast Asian contemporary art scene, Leow's early rebellious and ironic modes of expression earned him a notorious reputation in the early 90's when he drank his own urine during a performance at the 3rd Gwangju Biennale. He later elaborated on that gesture by packing and selling bottles of urine, an act epitomizing his tendency to elaborate subversive practices to address market consumption and contemporary society in a savvy, if controversial, way. He has exhibited in Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, Japan, Germany, India, The Netherlands, France, China, Hong Kong, Australia and the U.S.A.

of influences and techniques all held tightly together through Leow's high individual visual vocabulary, often described as a 'post-modern' visual strategy.

With his signature twisted and strange sensibility, Leow dips into kitsch and pop culture to explore issues of memory, mortality and identity. Influenced by Chinese mythology, the artist mythologizes his beloved late pet dog, Andy, transforming it into a hybrid dog/hawk-man image bearing uncanny resemblance to himself. Andy appears in several paintings and sculptures, from a whimsical, prankish character celebrating the extraordinary in the everyday reality, to a stark embodiment of Singapore's hybridized identity and Vincent's own alter-ego. The artist uses the allegory of pets to explore the issue of mortality and death obsession

Powerful installations create a stark and spare visual space that literally draws the viewer in to examine the physical weight of death

His latest exhibition *Tags and Treats* in Singapore Museum of Art marks a passage from a more violent and expressionistic tone to a more subtle, satiric one with an even greater impact. Using visual language, it builds a personal narrative for depicting global issues in a way seldom achieved by visual arts. A treat indeed!

Over the past two decades Leow has established himself as a remarkable imagist with influences ranging from popular culture, cinema, politics and mass media. His earlier paintings were often unapologetically aggressive or blatantly sexual but while pursuing his MFA in Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, in USA, he started looking closely at the booming economies while using techniques of commercial advertising in his work. Employing a range of media manifested in performance, installations, sculptures, digital and mixed-media works, *Tags and Treats* felt like a roller-coaster

that haunts a significant part of his works. The title *Tags and Treats* refers both to pet identity tags, as well as military dog tags that are often used to identify the dead or wounded in war. One section of the exhibition, called *The Ballad of Andy: Remember You Will Die* Homage to the Everyman, depicts various sculptures made of piles of bones, referring to the baggage death leaves behind for the living. Echoing Apollinaire's famous statement that "One can't carry one's father's corpse about everywhere," Leow's powerful installations create a stark and spare visual space that literally draws the viewer in to examine the physical weight of death.

In exploring the issue of collective memory, the artist undertakes the transformation of classical forms such as the head busts and plinths, turning them into heavy feet busts, elevating the status of the unsung heroes of history: the feet beneath the heads that history chooses to



» Leow's depiction of his late pet, Andy, bearing resemblance to himself photo: Inju

remember. Leow's poignant, commemorative and melancholic tone haunts his series of Middle Eastern-inspired veiled portraits, among which is Leow's *Mona Lisa*, depicted as a black outline with only her white hands visible on the canvas.

A prolific artist that never runs out of relevant things to "say", Vincent Leow possesses

the rare energy and visual literacy of a true enfant terrible of a generation. The exhibition, with its various explorations, marks a milestone of new direction of alternative art, where a new, more subtle yet stimulating visual language is used to address reality in its most unsettling, absurd and extraordinary manifestation. A tag to be remembered.

It has to be this Way2: Lindsay Seers at the Mead Gallery

Rachel Guthrie reviews Lindsay Seers' moving exhibition at the Arts Centre which laments the disappearance of her sister

Whether or not people agree art is becoming increasingly inviting, it is becoming increasingly involving. This is evident in the way contemporary art, and so much of the work exhibited at the Arts Centre's Mead Gallery, is trying to immerse its audience into varying 3D and multi-media art formats. It seems only logical that this should become today's trend, considering how long the average individual spends in front of screens in a world that is almost completely reproduced virtually. There is a certain desire for intimacy.

This couldn't be truer for the work of artist Lindsay Seers, who was mute until she was eight years old. This was due to her feeling overwhelmed by the intensity of her sensory experiences of the world in a way that words, quite literally, became insufficient for addressing it. But in this new world, the world created for us in these art exhibitions, do we long for reality or for fantasy?

The artist's inspiration for the film and for-

tifying sculptures was the disappearance of her step-sister, Christine Parks, perhaps in a diamond smuggling area in west Africa. It appears that Seer's searches for the facts of the case: for clues to her survival, and records of memories and events. Yet the work is far from a missing persons case; its style of communication reflects the confusion of the data found. Nothing, when viewing the film, appears to be true. It all seems like a surreal, disjointed fantasy.

Seer's film *It has to be this Way2* imposes its impression in a completely unique and praiseworthy manner. Even though one longs for reality, for the truth of the matter, when one discovers that it does not embody the preconceived ideal image, one retreats from the search for good.

The room in which this short gothic thriller (20 minutes of fear-invoking voices and progressive imagery) is shown in is a mock, true-to-scale slave fort and throughout the film flashes of images of the real and the re-created are integrated until one loses any real sense of location.

Seers picks you up and carries you in and out of reality. At times you are very conscious of the view you have down upon the circular screen that imitates looking through the camera; at other times you are completely submerged. At anytime when you are not consumed by baffled

Nothing, when viewing the film, appears to be true

thoughts, you can admire her creative ability to relate language, the arts, and experience. A skill fostered during, and in reaction to her time when she couldn't speak herself.

Get involved in Seer's work and become the modern viewer. From outside appearances, the white cube design of gallery seems empty of substance. But upon seeing the film inside

the slave fortress, you begin to make sense of the sculptures found outside of it. You needn't stop for 20 minutes to capture Lindsay's unique and ultra-modern, creative style of film making; even two minutes inside the viewing room gives you a great sense of mystery, intrigue and to some vague extent - insight. And a warning, don't arrive with the preconception that the work there is to be understood; to enjoy the full glory of contemporary art you mustn't search for an answer, but enjoy the journey of exploration.

This essentially is the idea behind Lindsay Seer's *It Has to be this Way2* project. She is not likely to solve the mystery of her missing step-sister, but is to revel in the unknown of the journey and through a range of interviews and travels, building up a picture of the distortion and frailty of memory itself.

The exhibition continues until 11th December in the Mead Gallery in the Arts Centre. Entrance is free.



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Lifestyle



Minimalist fashion: is less really more?

Josh Newis-Smith investigates the defining trend of the season ahead and questions its back to basics approach

With that hefty student loan in the bank you may have hit the high street with some vengeance in recent weeks in pursuit of the latest wears. However alarm bells would soon be ringing, as instead of the usual in-your-face dress with an intoxicating print you would have come across practical, may we say, lifeless minimalist pieces in their droves. Perhaps you are asking yourself: is fashion in hibernation? Well fashionistas, it isn't! The fashion gods have spoken and pared down chic is THE trend of the season.

Your first reaction may be to yawn. I don't blame you. After all, most of our fashion education has taken place during the era of Alexander McQueen and John Galiano, whose tastes for theatrics and OTT dressing spread far and wide replacing minimalist pieces of the 1990s one heavily embellished garment at a time. However, we must now worship at the altar of our new deity, Phoebe Philo, who took Celine from zero to hero in one epic minimalist swoop a few seasons ago. Philo immediately reinstated vocabulary the fashion world had long forgotten:

wearable, polished and above all reliable. This season the likes of Chloe, Stella McCartney and beyond have thrown themselves fully onto the Philo bandwagon with a concoction of tailored classics and luxurious textures.

I am hardly getting an aneurysm over the term, "reliable pieces", but sometimes you have to take yourself out of the equation and it looks as if logical, hardworking, fit for purpose clothes are resonating with women now. It appears the fashion world has put its Jimmy Choo adorned feelers out into the big wide world, sensed the morbid economic situation, scurried back to the drawing board and delivered what the recessionista dreams of: garments with longevity and versatility. It's showing us mere mortals that it isn't as out of touch as we once thought. Body finally seems to meet mind, placing disposable fashion on the back burner with trans-seasonal chic the ultimate buzz word.

The idea of clothes being trans-seasonal is a fashion twist I need to embrace as a person who feels a touch trashy when he whips out the same item from season to season and is forever in pursuit of something new, credit card permit-

ting, but I remain relatively unexcited. It is indeed evident that minimalism demands a new mentality, one at odds with our highly visual society where an eye catching image is everything. It seems we need to re-appropriate our fashion terminology and whilst we may see a dowdy 1970s camel throwback we must vocalise something along the lines of: OMG check out that visionary piece of tailoring which will last for yonks! It's got to catch on right?

Moreover the minimalist trend urges a back to basics approach to dressing and instead of ruling that ladies must squish a muffin top into the latest oh so tight dress, the likes of Marc Jacobs are forcing us to reengage with our body image with tailoring which allows such previously hidden gems as the hip to be reborn in full skirted glory.

For the mature fashion pack this is fabulous news: their rusty old bones now have a mature look to embrace. But what about us spring chickens, who have for the last few years tottered around in sky scrapper heels and dresses which have just skimmed the nether-regions? Isn't the minimalist aesthetic a bit dowdy? I am

already missing brash body exposure, so here's hoping that the minimalist formula is put to rest once fashion's hibernation is over. In the meantime get me a shot of sequins with colourful kick..... STAT!

There is more to minimalism than taking one black cardigan and teaming it with some polyester/cotton mix trousers. Here is my guide to nailing the trend:

- Keep to a select muted palette of black, navy, camel, grey and white.
- Exercise control. The temptation is to over compensate with accessories but simplicity is the way forward.
- Run to Gap and grab a pair of trousers from their premium range which are causing a wave of tsunami like proportions in the fashion press. The wide leg and the boy fit pairs come highly recommended.
- Tuck a slinky silk blouse into high waisted trousers or a longer skirt and add a seductive lace bra to take your look from sexually starved secretary to smouldering temptress.
- In order to medal this season add a sleek military coat for extra precision.



Food glorious food: rocky road

Danni Slater helps us celebrate National Chocolate Week with a delicious recipe to keep away the cold weather blues.

October sees the arrival of many things: a hint of crispness in the air, an increasingly large flow of work and, of course, Halloween. But something that is often (rather shamefully) ignored is National Chocolate Week. Yup. That's an official excuse to stuff ourselves full of the sweet stuff, or at least try out a new recipe! We may be a week behind, but wherever chocolate is concerned late is always better than never and with this super-simple, no-bake slice you'll be forgetting those October blues in no time. This easy rocky road tastes just like those in the cafe that are £1.50 a piece... only this one costs as little as £1.25 per batch. Win! Of course, you could make this recipe as expensive as you like, but if you're not fussy about your chocolate, Tesco's own actually works really well; although you can never beat a bit of Cadbury's. Or Galaxy. Or Nestle. Or Lindor. Oh, the list goes on...

Ingredients

100g Dark chocolate
100g Milk chocolate
70g Unsalted butter
60g Raisins/sultanas
60g Marshmallows
40g Rich tea biscuits

For the topping (just to make it look less, well, rocky!)

50g Milk chocolate (or if you're feeling especially crazy, you could use white choc instead)
30g Unsalted butter

Method

1. Break both types of chocolate into squares and pop into a bowl along with the butter. Place the bowl over a saucepan of recently boiled water [the heat from this should be enough; no need to light the gas] and melt gently until smooth and glossy. Once melted, remove from the heat and stir in the sultanas, marshmallows and biscuit.

2. Line a small tin [or plastic food box] with Clingfilm and pour in the chocolatey mixture. Hmm, is that some left behind in the bowl? What a shame, you'll have to get rid of it somehow...

3. You'll probably notice the mixture looks a little rustic, which is fine if you're planning to scoff it all yourself, but if you want to make it look a little smoother just melt that extra 50g of milk chocolate with the butter in the same way as before and pour over the top.

4. Let the mixture rest until it reaches room temperature (about half an hour) and then place it in the fridge to harden. You can leave it in there for as long as you want but if you're anything like me you'll want it out as soon as is humanly possible – 2 hours should do it.

5. Now, just remove it from the tin/box, slice it up and...

Oh wait, where's it gone?!

When I grow up, I want to be... unemployed

Charlotte Haycraft discusses the dilemma facing so many students at the moment: what's your post-Warwick plan?

So what do you want to do when you've finished?" Honestly, if I had a penny for every time someone has asked me that question over the past few months I would have a very nice answer: Immediate retirement. In the Caribbean. Unfortunately, thus far no one has agreed to pay me said pennies, and I am therefore stuck with a rather different answer: Sorry, I haven't a clue.

Now this wouldn't be so bad if I hadn't always been one of those people who's had a fairly good idea of where they're going next. I've never had any difficulty deciding what school I wanted to go to, what subjects I wanted to study, where I would go on my gap year, or what degree I would take at University. But unfortunately for me, that's where the certainty stopped and I'm not enjoying the consequences.

Put simply, I just can't decide what I want to do with the rest of my life. Beginning my final year at university, I'd really like to be able to say I have a plan, but I just can't. When it comes to a decision about careers I feel remarkably like I'm stuck in a dark room with no likelihood of seeing the light any time soon, but knowing if I don't find the light, I might be stuck there for a long time yet. Gloomy isn't it?

Of course, I have had the odd eureka moment, when I've suddenly discovered my calling and started making plans for the future. 'Odd' being the operative word in that sentence, however. One eureka moment would be amazing,

but when an entirely different light-bulb illuminates in my head two weeks later, totally casting the previous revelation into shadow as if it had just been a moment of madness, things suddenly become a lot less clear. The problem is, once you've overturned one idea, there's never any certainty that you're not going to change your mind again. A fear of not being able to fix on something creeps in and I start to feel that in a way it would be better to have no ideas at all, rather than the confusion that comes from yo-yoing between a collection of ten.

I often think I could have been more sensible. Degrees like medicine and law, these are subjects that can lead somewhere fairly obvious and well paid as long as you work hard. I study History, and I'm facing anything but the same sort of certainty. To make matters worse, we are constantly being bombarded by the television, radio and newspapers about how terrible the employment prospects of our generation are. So not only don't I have any concrete ideas about what I want to do, there's a good chance that when I do finally manage to fix on something, there won't be any jobs available anyway. On top of that, whatever jobs there are will go to people who, unlike me, made their decision a long time ago and have filled every spare moment they have with relevant internships and work experience.

But then again, maybe I'm being a touch ridiculous, melodramatic even. I'm not the only

one in this position after all and life could be a lot worse! Besides, in some ways it is quite nice to be without a plan, to have those exciting choices still ahead of me. The world is my

oyster and all that.

I'd just like my oyster to have a job offer clamped inside it, rather than a pearl. Then I'll be happy...



Bangkok: spiritual home or hedonistic playground?

Charlotte Kelloway explores Bangkok and by day visits poverty and Buddhist temples, and by night discovers lady boys and party-goers

Sometimes I find you will visit somewhere and whilst you appreciate its beauty and individuality, you feel as if you have experienced everything you want to and, as such, probably won't return. I have felt this way about several countries or cities I have seen. I have encountered them, explored them, sampled the local food and moved on. After all, there is so much more of this dynamic world left to discover. One place where I feel I could go back to again and again is Thailand. Its capital city alone, Bangkok, is enough of an addictive drug to constantly draw you to the country time and time again. I think Bangkok can best be described as being like Marmite- you either love it or hate it. It's loud, dirty, busy and smelly; yet has a certain undeniable charm. As soon as you step out of the airport into the sweltering heat, the air fills you with anticipation and overwhelms you with excite-

women, 40 baht for lady boys'. Some of these lady boys are so convincing, with better legs than most women. I have heard stories of men taking them home only to have a rather nasty shock! The nightlife in this quirky city is like no-where else.

Despite the fact that after the sun has gone down Bangkok goes crazy, it also has a religious side with some really stunning Buddhist temples. These are decorated in the most ornate and elaborate fashion and glisten in the sunlight. There are glass ornamentations of every colour and the most beautiful carvings and embellishments one can imagine. Wandering around these temples and the grounds is akin to wandering around some kind of fairytale land, where everything gleams with a royal golden glow. In the grounds of the Grand Palace is 'Wat Phra Kaew', probably the most important temple in Bangkok, perhaps even in the whole

Alex Garland hits the nail on head in his book 'The Beach' when lead character Richard desires a decent deal, but has unease with 'haggling with poverty'

ment over the adventure you are just about to embark upon.

When I first visited Bangkok at 18, with a backpack and a couple of friends for company, it was the first place I had ever visited in Asia, and although before arriving I was a little apprehensive, I instantly loved it! Everything about the city buzzed; it was constantly alive. We first explored the markets and admittedly went a little wild. Before leaving home my backpack had been carefully packed and weighed, I had repeatedly walked around the house and up and down the stairs making sure my back could cope with the strain.

One night's shopping in a Bangkok market though and all that was out the window! Several kilos were added to my baggage which stayed with me for the next five months and I am sure my back did suffer for it. Bangkok's night markets are definitely a worthwhile experience in themselves. We first visited the numerous stalls up and down the famous backpacker's row: Khao San Rd. I loved this street, filled with hostels, bars, food stands and stalls. Everything is neon, the music is loud, the drinks are cheap, the locals are friendly and it is not unusual to see a lady boy or two wandering around. In fact, lady boys are so common in Bangkok and indeed in the rest of Thailand, that bars and restaurants will often classify them as a different gender; 'cocktails 50 baht for men, 30 baht for

of Thailand. Another stunning temple is 'Wat Pho' which houses a huge reclining Buddha.

What was truly shocking, however, was the massive divide between rich and poor. A couple of days into our trip we caught a boat down the Chao Phraya River, which winds its way through the centre of the city. On one side of the river are glorious temples and buildings, richly furnished and adorned; yet just on the other side, people live in shacks and shanty hut communities. Small wooden houses jut out, hanging over and almost submitting to the river's currents below. Women and small children sit washing their clothes as the men travel up and down the river in long wooden boats stacked high with fruit, persuading us to buy a banana or some mangoes or, God-forbid, some durian (the smelliest fruit on the planet; so foul is its stench, in fact, many hotels in Thailand ban it).

Whilst I am sure that as obvious tourists we were undoubtedly charged double, perhaps even triple, for everything we brought in Thailand, everything was still extremely cheap, especially considering what we would pay back home. Even though we knew we were being robbed blind, there was a certain level of discomfort, especially after seeing these wooden shacks alongside the river, in really pushing for a good bargain. I think Alex Garland in his book 'The Beach', hits the nail on head when lead



» A Buddhist monk inside the grounds of the Grand Palace photo: Charlotte Kelloway

character Richard expresses his desire to get a decent deal, but also has unease with what he calls 'haggling with poverty'.

This is what I think makes Bangkok so amazing; its diversity. On many levels Bangkok is a hugely significant city for Buddhism, home to the most important temple in Thailand. Yet as the sun sets, it becomes a hedonistic playground. There are buckets filled with cheap cocktails and every spirit in existence, parties, the infamous ping pong shows, lady boys and

all night raves. The party-goers, returning home at 4am, pass the monks on their way to morning prayer. Devotion and frugality exist alongside indulgence and pleasure in its excess. The extravagance and beauty of the royal palace and temples literally lie across the river from shack homes, shortage, scarcity, deficiency and poverty.

These contradictions and juxtapositions are all what make Bangkok what it is- a truly vibrant and unforgettable city.

Light at the end of the tunnel for Reds

Robin Jellis investigates the Liverpool Saga as Martin Broughton completes the sale of the club to New England Sports Ventures

With Liverpool hovering around the relegation zone in the Premier League, the dispute over the club's hierarchy was evidently a situation that needed to be resolved rapidly. Times indeed are tough for the Merseysiders: new boss Roy Hodgson has failed to make an impact, the club are a reported £240 million in debt and star players Fernando Torres and Steven Gerrard are perennially linked with moves away from Anfield.

But on Wednesday 13 October, some good news was finally announced. Co-owners Tom Hicks and George Gillett failed in their attempt to prevent the sale of Liverpool Football Club.

Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS), the club's major creditor, tried to force a sale to regain the money owed, but the American owners blocked the £300m sale to New England Sports Ventures (NESV), saying it undervalued the club.

The duo claimed the club was worth closer to £600 million, despite the fact that a year-long search for buyers yielded only two each offering approximately £300 million. The unpopular American co-owners had tried to oust the boardroom rivals who had sanctioned the sale of the club to NESV.

Liverpool chairman Martin Broughton claims that when the club was put up for sale, RBS requested undertakings from them that only he, as independent chairman, could make changes to the Liverpool board.

This was agreed to prevent the American duo blocking a sale; the format of the board meant Broughton, managing director Christian Purslow and commercial director Ian Ayre could outvote Hicks and Gillett.

However, Hicks tried to sack Purslow and Ayre and install his son, Mack, and Lori McCutcheon, who works for Hicks Holdings. Broughton rejected the proposal and the England-based board members lent their support to the NESV bid. Hicks, however, has insisted Broughton's actions were illegal and therefore the

sale to NESV is invalid.

As well as the NESV bid, Singapore business tycoon Peter Lim 'threw a spanner into the works' by making an offer of £320m in cash for the club and its liabilities, as well as pledging £40m for new players. A third bid was also tabled, the bid coming from hedge fund group Mill Financial, who would pay off the Reds' debt and commit £100m to a new stadium.

Mr Lim's bid may indeed have excited fans as it allowed Hodgson to continue the rebuilding of the club during the January transfer window. Lim had hoped that when the board reconstituted, it would not simply ratify a sale to NESV but consider all the offers before them. Lim requested that the board run a full and fair process to enable all of the offers to be considered before the future of the club was decided.

Wednesday's court decision meant the sale to NESV could proceed, although Broughton hinted rival bids were to be considered at an urgent board meeting. Broughton claimed that the "right owners" would be chosen to ensure "a great future" for Liverpool. Fans will be eager for the club's debts to be paid off promptly as it is believed that RBS must receive repayment by 15 November.

When Mr Justice Floyd rejected the application for an injunction on the sale of the club, he said that such a move would "risk stopping the sale and purchase agreement going ahead." He added that it would be "inappropriate in the circumstances" for him to grant Hicks and Gillett the right to appeal and they would have to apply to the Court of Appeal for permission.

However, the situation evolved dramatically. Although now rejected, the American owners were granted a temporary injunction by a Texas court to block the sale of Liverpool Football Club, only hours after they saw their challenge rejected by the High Court.

The fact that a court in Texas could lay claim to a dispute in England may



confuse some, however this was not an act to be taken lightly by anyone involved. Seen by many as a last roll of the dice, Hicks and Gillett were trying every trick in the book to delay an imminent sale and prevent making significant loss on the club they purchased three years before.

Nonetheless this was rejected and on Thursday 14th October, NESV became the new owners of Liverpool Football club.

NESV is partly owned by Boston Red Sox proprietor John W. Henry, and he truly is a man with proven pedigree.

Over the course of eight years at the baseball outfit, he has helped a club with a great history that had fallen on lean times, re-emerge as a serious contender.

He has combined a willingness to spend money with ground redevelopment and commercial opportunities. When Henry took control of the

Red Sox they had not won the World Series since 1918, but have already won it twice during his reign. Liverpool fans will be hoping that Henry can help the club return to the glory

NESV is partly owned by Boston Red Sox proprietor John W. Henry and he truly is a man with proven pedigree.

days of the 70s and 80s. But is it that simple?

Whilst prosperous, Henry has similar wealth levels to those of Stoke chairman Peter Coates and so Liverpool will not be competing financially with the Man City's of this world. Similarly, although promising to develop Anfield, he has stopped short of pledging to build a new stadium and so Liverpool fans should

approach the situation with caution. It's all too easy to forget the optimism that surrounded the fans when former chairman David Moores sold the club in February 2007 to Hicks and Gillett. He labelled it as "a great step forward for the club, shareholders and its fans."

They too promised to make funds available, to build a new stadium at Stanley Park and restore Liverpool to the heights of European football.

Thus, although the new owners have said all the right things and made the right moves, I can't help but feel a sense of *deja-vu*. I must stress that for Liverpool to prosper they need investment and the backing of the fans, however most importantly they need stability.

It seems a new day has dawned for Liverpool and at least now the sale has completed, the board room bickering can stop and hopefully the club can focus on one thing. Football.

From one premiership to another: the influx of foreign players

No doubt that after England's "lucky" midweek draw; as Mr. Capello himself described it, at least one commentator will have raised the issue that constantly seems to haunt English football. Where is all the young English talent in the Barclays Premiership?

The answer is seemingly simple for many followers of the game: kept out of Premiership starting XI's by foreign players. Thus, the post-mortem that follows every football World Cup like clockwork, raised the issue of foreign player quotas in the Premiership. But the cries for change have, at least for now, fallen on deaf ears.

Yet the most worrying aspect of the situation for English Rugby, is the fact that the Aviva Premiership seems to be following the Barclays Premier-

ship to the same exotic destination; one full of foreign players.

The figure given by Premier Rugby is that 65 percent of players playing in the Aviva Premiership are English, yet a glance at the English clubs does little to settle one's nerves.

At Saracens, the influx of Shalk Brits, Jaques Burger and Ernst Joubert, brought in under South African Director of Rugby Brendan Venter, has caused the most discomfort amongst rugby fans.

Yet it is young hopes for the future who have suffered the most. Twenty-two year old Noah Cato who had promised to break into the England set up has struggled to get into the 23 man match day squads, mainly due to the Fijian pairing of Kameli Ratuvou and Micheal Tagicakibau.

There is however, a saving grace for young players, the need for strength in depth. Big squads are vital to a successful season in the Aviva Premiership due to the physicality of the game, the grueling fixture list and international call-ups.

Some clubs may fair better than others with regard to injuries and the loss of international players, but it is then when young players must make their mark. Whether players are given a one match or one month window of opportunity, this is when they must put out their stall and show that they are as good as their foreign counterparts.

It is for this reason that no quota or cap on foreign players is needed. Any player who is good enough will get their chance; the problem is that

it may take longer for them to get the break they need than it would have if only 5 foreign players were allowed in a match day 23.

As a result it may also take longer to develop, yet the positives of playing with foreign players should definitely not be overlooked. Young academy players will gain invaluable experience playing alongside their foreign colleagues, many who will have brought a wealth of knowledge and experience from leagues such as the Super 14 (now the Super 15), the Magners League and the French Top 14.

The varied playing styles and tactics used in different leagues around the world should be harnessed through clubs' foreign contingencies to aid and develop young academy

players.

It is clear that the Aviva Premiership; despite the recent influx of foreign players is not in the same situation as its round ball counterpart.

The figure of 65 percent English players within the Premiership has remained constant and the likes of Ben Foden, Chris Ashton and Ben Youngs breaking into the national side, show that English clubs are still bringing through talented young players.

Yet there are warning signs that if English clubs do not keep focused on developing youngsters through their academies and instead opt for foreign imports, then the English Rose may suffer the same plight as the Three Lions.

Ed Socha

Former Warwick rower reigns supreme

Samuel Hewlings continues his interview with the Warwick graduate and Beijing Paralympic Gold Medallist Tom Aggar

Continued from back page

ing his own world record, and later that year won Paralympic gold in Beijing (breaking his own world record yet again).

He won every race at the start of the 2009 season, and in his last race of that year, won by over 15 seconds. At the risk of stating the obvious, that's a very, very long time. And yes, that was a new world record as well.

He was the first, and to date, the only adaptive rower to achieve a sub-five minute time. In recognition of his achievements, he this year became the International Rowing Federation's first 'Adaptive Rower of the Year'. He makes Usain Bolt look like a fun runner.

It's all too easy to forget the circumstances in which Aggar took up rowing, and that he nearly wasn't a rower at all.

I ask Aggar about the challenges in switching from playing one sport, as an able-bodied athlete, to a completely different sport as a disabled athlete:

"I think the most challenging thing was using just my upper body in a sport where conventionally most of the power comes from your legs. I was always pretty strong naturally but it took some time to train my upper body for endurance exercise. I mean, when you're using your legs you can

always dig that bit deeper and find that bit extra, but when your arms have blown you're in trouble."

What about the switch from a team to an individual sport?

"I do miss the team side of rugby, having to look out for your teammates and work well together, but for my category in rowing there is only the single as an option for competition."

Having achieved so much so soon after taking up the sport, there surely isn't much room for improvement:

"I think being an athlete you're always motivated by challenges. I remember looking at the winner of the Worlds in 2006 and thinking 'I am never going to break five minutes 30', but it became a challenge, the next being to go sub-4:50. I think with the right conditions it's possible."

It's hard not to draw parallels between the speed at which Aggar is lowering the disabled, or 'adaptive', rowing world record and middle-distance running in the 1950's, when Roger Bannister first ran a mile in under four minutes. It isn't all about breaking his own world record:

"We have the World Championships this year out in New Zealand in November which will follow on to qualification in 2011, and obviously the big one in 2012."

Having a chance to compete at a

home games in a sport that you're passionate about is every athlete's dream, so for now 2012 is definitely the dream."

Aggar, of course, isn't the only disabled British rower hoping to achieve success in London in 2012.

He tells me about the other, perhaps less well-known, British athletes he will be competing alongside at the World Rowing Championships in

It's all too easy to forget the circumstances in which Aggar took up rowing, and that he nearly wasn't a rower at all

New Zealand:

"Two teammates I would mention competing in the coxed four event are visually impaired athlete James Roe from Stratford-upon-Avon and fellow Warwick University graduate Ryan Chamberlain, who in April 2008 lost his lower right leg in a mountain biking accident."

With under two years until the event, it is clear that gaining gold in east London is at the forefront of his mind. If I were betting man, I wouldn't be betting against this determined individual.

Having rowed at Warwick myself,

I am interested in how our training schedule compares to the national squad's regime.

When I talk to Aggar he is in Banyoles, the venue for the rowing at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, on a ten day training camp- but when he tells me about their training, it does seem rather like his life is one long training camp. It soon becomes clear how much work goes into reaching the highest level and more so maintaining such levels of performance.

"We train all year round, six days a week, two to three sessions per day on the water, on the ergo [rowing machine] or in the gym lifting weights." Not quite the same as our training at Warwick, then. One thing is the same though:

"The odd song before a race helps to get you fired up, something like D12's Fight Music or Eminem's Lose Yourself."

I ask Aggar what his biggest challenges have been, expecting him to talk about the accident five years ago that eventually led to rowing. But the competitiveness that has taken him so far in three different sports shows through when he says:

"The biggest challenge for me, having trained full time for a few seasons, is keeping injury free. The first year or so I always pushed myself pretty hard in training but paid for it by

picking up injuries. I've learned a lot since, and it's important to listen to your body when you're training every day- knowing when to push hard and when to say enough is enough."

I get the impression Aggar won't say "enough is enough" for many years; he is, after all, still relatively new to rowing and won't yet have reached his peak. Less obvious is when, or even if, an athlete capable of really challenging Aggar will emerge; for now, it seems, Aggar will continue to dominate in a sport he so nearly didn't discover.

Since becoming a rower, Tom has overcome every challenge he has faced to date and the sky is the limit as to what he can achieve in the sport. He truly is a role model and shows what you can achieve with dedication and achievement.

In between breaking world records and adding to his collection of gold medals, Aggar is an ambassador for a charity called Wooden Spoon:

"They're a great charity committed to making a real difference to disadvantaged children and young people in the UK using the values and ethos of the game of rugby."

For more information visit www.woodenspoon.com.

If you're interested in rowing at Warwick, visit www.uwbc.org.uk or email president@uwbc.org.uk.

RED SENSATION
Ultimate House Music
19.10.10 - Copper Rooms
10pm-2am

University of Warwick
Pole Dance Society

Shisha SOCIETY

In association with Warwick pole dancing and Shisha societies

Tom Aggar: Olympic Gold Medallist



Sam Hewlings

Few people get the chance to play a sport for their county. Fewer still represent their university in a second sport. How many then go on to represent their country at the Paralympics in a third sport, win gold, and break the world record? Just one actually- he went to Warwick University and he's called Tom Aggar.

As a teenager, Aggar played water polo for Hertfordshire and rugby in the Saracens youth development squad, and he later played rugby for Warwick's 1st XV as a second-row forward.

In 2005, whilst still at Warwick, Aggar's promising rugby career was cut short when he lost the use of his legs in an accident, and a couple of years later he took up rowing:

"Having spent three months in a spinal unit, I was hungry to get back to some sort of fitness. I crossed paths with a guy called Robin Gibbons who was pioneering a new type of rowing machine for people who had suffered a spinal injury and couldn't use their legs to exercise."

Using this FES, or functional electronic stimulator, to artificially contract his leg muscles, Aggar won his category at the 2006 Indoor Rowing Championships, breaking the world record.

"At the time, lots of people

were like, 'why do you want to do that, your legs are paralysed', but I couldn't think of any reason not to do it and I loved it. Using the machine, my leg muscles came back to some form- even to the point where I embarrassed my brother by having bigger quads than him ... as you can imagine, he wasn't impressed."

For Aggar, it was about more than just keeping fit or embarrassing his brother:

"At the time I thought 'this is the best thing to keep me in shape', and if one day there was a breakthrough in stem cell therapy I would be giving myself the best chance of walking again by having strong legs and good fitness. It was then I got the bug most rowers talk about."

Aggar quickly made the transition to rowing on the water after meeting the British Paralympic rowing coach at the 2006 Indoor Rowing Championships. His first ever major race

"Being top of that medal podium was a pretty special feeling." It is a special feeling Aggar has got to know better than most

was the 2007 World Championships in Munich. No pressure there, then.

Having taken up rowing just months earlier, Aggar beat the reigning two-time world champion, set a new world record and took gold.

Not bad for a water polo-playing rugby player.

"The World Championship final in 2007 was my most memorable race. At the time an Australian athlete, Dominic Moneypenny, was dominating the event and I had my sights set on taking his title off him. All I can remember is in the last hundred metres being closed down, hanging on for dear life and not really knowing whether I crossed the line first or not until looking up at the results board. Being top of that medal podium was a pretty special feeling."

It is a special feeling Aggar has since got to know better than most; he began the 2008 season by break-

Continued overleaf